THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE MODERN WORLD

REV. RAYMOND CALKINS

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THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE MODERN WORLD

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THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE MODERN WORLD

BY
RAYMOND CALKINS

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TO MY SISTER

MARY WHITON CALKINS

WHO

WITH PROFOUND INTELLECTUAL INTERESTS

AND SOCIAL SYMPATHIES

HAS MAINTAINED A LIFE-LONG LOYALTY

TO THE CHURCH

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PREFACE

This book has been written for that large and earnest group of people, in every community, who are not instinctively attached to the Church by tradition or experience. They may have been trained in its ways, but neither training nor tradition can permanently ally them with it. Experience they have had, but of a different sort. They have come in contact with many movements in our modern world making for righteousness and justice which lie entirely outside the sphere of ecclesiasticism and of conventional Church activity and interest. They are asking themselves in all seriousness if these have not a better claim to their loyalty than the Church as they see it and know it. It is with this problem that the present discussion deals, in the hope that it may fairly describe the influence and directing power of the historical Church and the important position which it occupies and fills in our modern world. The writer of this book has not tried to conceal his own profound faith in the Church as an indispensable aid to personal living and to social progress. Yet he has tried to deal frankly with those difficulties which have kept many from feeling as he does. Most of the material in the book has been used in addresses, some of which have appeared in print. It has all been rewritten for the present publication. The writer desires to express his indebtedness to the Committee of the Christian Associations and Missionary Boards under whose auspices the work has been undertaken, and to the many people who have assisted him by criticism and suggestion.

Cambridge, Massachusetts.
Easter, 1924.

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THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE MODERN WORLD

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE MODERN WORLD

Chapter I

THE CHURCH AND ITS CRITICS

The Christian Church is being closely scrutinized by many people in our modern world. The day has passed when the Church is taken for granted, when its position is conceded as a matter of course. The modern mind, which has weighed and found wanting so many of the inherited traditions and conventions of the past, is now making its trenchant judgments on the Church. As a result, the Church confronts a considerable body of opinion in our modern world which is indifferent, unfavourable, and sometimes positively hostile to its claims. There are many people who have their grave doubts about the future of institutional religion in our day. They believe that the spirit of Jesus will survive, that the ideals of Christianity will continue to prevail. But they are inclined to invert the well-known message of the angel to the Church in Philadelphia[1] and to say to it today: "Behold there is set before thee a door which is shut, and no man can open it." They cherish the idea that the Church has for its chief possession not a present, and not a future, but a past.

The most outspoken critics of the Church are certain radicals in the ranks of the Socialists. These hold the Church to be a positive obstacle to social progress, the stronghold of economic orthodoxy, which must be overthrown or left behind in the march to freedom and justice. One can quote here almost at random from the radical press. "My associates . . . have come to look upon the Church and the ministry as the apologists and defenders of the wrongs committed against the people. They use their exalted positions to discourage and discounte-

[1] Rev. 3:8.

nance all practical efforts of the toilers to lift themselves out of the slough of despondency and despair."[2] "The American working man hates the very shadow of the spire that the Church casts across his path, for the Church preaches and permits all those things which are considered necessary for capitalistic society."[3] "In these later days, the Church has fallen into almost obscurity as a power in the moral and civic life of the nation. Its form remains, its habiliments are still gorgeous, but it walks behind, not in front, . . . and its gestures and speech are almost unheeded in the great march of the nation."

Nearly as trenchant is the criticism of the so-called 'intellectual,' who feels that by its incorporation into our ecclesiastical system Christianity has been well-nigh destroyed. Whatever he may think of the Christian Idea, he has but one opinion of the Christian Church. Thus we are told that "the intellectual . . . does not pay the Church the compliment of being hostile to it . . . he simply ignores it as a force incapable of good or evil."[4] A writer in the New Republic takes "Can Christianity Tolerate the Church?" for the title of his article, and reaches the conclusion that "it would seem far more reasonable to ask 'Can Christianity survive with the Church?' than to ask 'Can Christianity survive without the Church?' . . . If all should come to recognize that an official Christian Church is by its very nature un-Christian, it would vastly accelerate the religious reconstruction which is, in any case, inevitable."[5]

But, if "the seat of the scornful is full, so also is the seat of the mournful."[6] These look at the Church as an interesting relic, the survival of an age that is dead. They are inclined to echo the words of William Morris:

> "Outwardly splendid as of old,
> Inwardly lifeless, dull and cold.
> Her strength and use and beauty gone,
> Like the dead moon she still shines on."

There is a very comfortable persuasion cherished by some people outside of the Christian Church, and a very uncom-

[2] Modern Industry, p. 195.

[3] This, of course, is not the attitude of the American wage-earners in general. The reader will find a helpful summary of the Church opinions of representative American labour leaders in the Homiletical Review, September, 1923.

[4] J. S. Schapiro.

[5] J. E. McAfee.

[6] Dr. C. E. Jefferson.

fortable persuasion which some people within it possess, that it has seen its best days. Our Lord said that He would found His Church upon a rock and that the gates of hell should not prevail against it; but a good many people in our day incline to the persuasion that the gates of hell already have prevailed against it. We are assaulted on all sides by an insistent and by a voluminous statement to the effect that the Church has fallen upon evil days and is in itself in a bad way. To a great many people, the Christian Church presents the singular spectacle of singing "Onward, Christian Soldiers," but at the same time steadily falling backward. "I sometimes wonder seriously if the organized churches are going to have any future at all," said a well-known religious teacher recently. "Many of you who attend churches often feel that, after all, you are attending the death-bed of a great institution." Our papers and our magazines are filled with articles about the ebb of ecclesiasticism, the decline of institutional religion, and the failure of the Church. Especially are we asked to contrast the plight into which we are now fallen, with the Church as it used to be in the good old days of our fathers. We are reminded that the Church is put to it in our day to get reputable timber for its ministry, that we used to have wooden churches and granite ministers, but now all too often we have granite churches and wooden ministers.

We are asked to contrast the position of the Church in the community, as it exists today, with the position which it used to possess. Then, all but a fraction of the community would be found within the Church, and the fraction outside was the least influential portion of it; whereas now we are told that only a fraction of any community is interested in the Church and that fraction the least influential portion of it. We are reminded that the habit of church-going is fast disappearing as an element in our American religious life. We are asked to look back to the good old New England days when the little white meeting-house on the hill, which is now tenanted by a scant dozen or score of worshippers, was crowded twice or even three times on Sunday. We are told that the little brick meeting-house exercised a far greater influence in our towns and cities of a century ago than many of our capacious and impressive modern temples of worship do today.

Thus there is abroad in the land a general idea, not only that the Church has been steadily losing ground in recent years, but that the rate of this retrogression has increased

to such a degree that the very existence of the Church as an institution is seriously threatened. A little further ebbing of the tide, and the Church will be left high and dry. "We are today confronted," one writer says, "by the startling fact that in practically every part of the Christian world the overwhelming majority of the people is alienated from Christianity as represented by the churches." Or again, "No single fact impresses the investigator of religious problems more forcibly than the failure of the modern church as a whole to maintain its power in the social fabric of today. This movement in its totality portends the grave modification, if not the entire overthrow, of a religious system which for two thousand years has exercised incalculable influence upon the thought and lives of men."[7]

Some go even further and write articles under the caption "Christianity versus the Churches." "If the Churches," we are asked to believe, "as they stand today in America, in their attendance, their influence, their active life, are the embodiment of the whole spirit, life, influence and service of religion, the question of whether they are to survive, or ought to survive, is open to debate." The degree of truth to be found in these reiterated statements will be discussed in succeeding chapters. The question will be faced whether or not the Church in our modern world may be fairly called anti-Christian, obsolete, or moribund. Here we are reminded only that many people have come to believe these things. As a result, their faith in the Church has been weakened, if it has not been shaken or, indeed, destroyed. They are asking themselves the question whether the Church, as it exists today, can rightfully claim to be an indispensable agent for the setting up of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

No one questions that there is a large, if not an increasing, number of people in every community who are practically unchurched. The Psalmist was glad when they said unto him, "Let us go into the house of the Lord."[8] But a good many people today would not be glad at all. The Church does not appeal to them. They have little to do with it. All that they ever see of the Church is the spire. All that they hear is the church bell. They never turn to it unless something happens to make them need it. Practically their whole life from New Year's Day to

[7] The Arena, 1908: "The Ebb of Ecclesiasticism."
[8] Psalm 122:1.

Christmas goes on precisely as if no such institution as the Church of Jesus Christ existed.

This great multitude may be divided easily into certain well-defined groups. There are first of all the people who take no interest in the witness which the Church seeks to bear. The Church stands for religion—but they do not. The Church reasons concerning "righteousness and temperance and judgment to come"—but these things do not interest them. They live a life that is largely bounded by material interests and pleasures. The Church ought to seek after them, but it is easy to understand why they do not seek out the Church.

After them come a large number of careless and indifferent people. They were brought up in the Church. In a way they still believe in it. They have nothing to urge against it. If asked, they will admit that they "know they ought to go to church,"—but then, they rarely do. They have grown, as they say, "out of the habit of it." Perhaps they have moved away from the smaller church in town or village when they "knew everyone" and everyone knew them. In the great city church, they do not feel at home. They do not "know anyone." Or, they are busy. The home cares are so many. Or, Sunday is the only day in the week which they have with their families. Or, they are tired and Sunday is their only day of rest. Thus they drift away from the Church. Deserting it is not a matter of conviction with them, but gradually the Church recedes into the background of their lives and becomes a memory.

Another group embraces the so-called "broad-minded" people who went to church when they were young, but have put away childish things now that they have become men. They say the Church was thrust on them when they were children, and, now that they have become of age, they in turn have thrust aside the Church. Their children shall be brought up differently. They shall be allowed to "choose for themselves." They shall not be allowed to choose whether they shall go to school on Monday; but they shall be allowed to choose whether they shall go to church on Sunday. Some of them are so extremely broad-minded that they have arrived at the idea that one religion is as good as another. This is only another way of saying that, to their thinking, no religion is any real good at all. They feel themselves to be intel-

lectually superior to much that is still of importance to people less universal in their sympathies. It is their "breadth of view" which has enabled them to graduate from the Church.[9]

Again, there are many men and women in every community who are earnestly seeking for the satisfaction of their spiritual desires, who fail to find that satisfaction in the conventions of the churches. Those channels for the communication of spiritual grace seem to them to have run dry. They are turning therefore to new and extra-ecclesiastical sources of spiritual refreshment. Our modern world abounds in cults which have thousands of devoted adherents who once were members of the Christian Church. Theosophy, menticulture, spiritualism, these count their followers by the hundred thousands. A careful reading of the religious advertisements in our daily papers produces the impression which overtook the mind of St. Paul as he walked through the streets of ancient Athens and beheld altars to so many strange gods. These people are looking for light and health and healing, but they are no longer looking to the Church for these things. For this alienation the Church is doubtless somewhat to blame. If it were always and everywhere itself more truly spiritual, it would retain more of the spiritually minded. Yet there will always be a large number of "seekers after Truth" whom no kind of ecclesiasticism will ever satisfy.

There is, however, still another class outside the Church, whose attitude demands special consideration. These people are neither wicked nor selfish; they are not careless and indifferent; they are not suffering from a superficial or abnormal breadth of mind. They are not devotees at any strange altar. They do not go in for any curious creed, neither do they pin their faith in the latest fad or cure-all. These are level-headed, earnest and deeply religious people. In general, they are in hearty sympathy and in deepest accord with the ideals of Christianity, and they are reverent believers in and followers of Jesus Christ. If they felt that they conscientiously could do so, they would be only too glad to throw in their lot with church people and to join heart and hand with them. But they do not feel able to do so. They distinguish between the Christianity of Christ and the Christianity of the churches: and they find the latter overgrown with tradition and encrusted with

[9] See Bernard Iddings Bell, "Goodness and Religion," Atlantic Monthly.

formalism and worn-out orthodoxies, or merely echoing the accent of the secular world. Religion they hold to be a fresh inspiration from the spirit of God brooding over this present world, but the Church they find to be largely a crystallization out of the experience and mind of a dead past. They have their hesitancies and compunctions about the Church which are born, not of indifference or irreligion, but, on the contrary, of reverence and of faith.

Often, it is the conduct of worship in the Church that makes them hesitate. They ask, Does it convey a genuine religious impression, does it generate a truly moral inspiration? It seems too often to lack a truly vitalizing power. Again, the preaching and teaching of the Church seem to them to be barren and arid. Not only are the dialect and vocabulary of the pulpit different from their own, but the ideas, the intellectual background, the fundamental presuppositions seem archaic and out-worn, inadequate to actual intellectual and social conditions with the very existence of which the preacher often seems not to be familiar. Also a spiritual passion and persuasiveness often seems to be lacking as if the preacher were not himself convinced that he had a Gospel to declare, good news of which he was the herald. Chiefly, however, the attitude of the Church, both pulpit and pew, toward what is known as the social question disturbs and discourages many thoughtful people today. So much Church life and activity seems to them to be petty and narrow and parochial. The sectarian rivalries and competitions seem monstrous in the face of world problems that call for the united voice and action of the Church. The enthusiasm that is generated by the Church does not seem to them to be directed to the highest moral ends. The average congregation of well-to-do and conservative people often seems to be not only apathetic towards, but often positively hostile to, some of the most significant movements of our time that are making for social justice and brotherhood.

Real religion in our day is concerned with the fundamental questions of social righteousness, industrial equity, international brotherhood and economic justice. And the Church which is not in contact with these problems, and fails to become an instrument in their solution, is a Church which is actually out of touch with not only the best thought, but the best religion of our time. To many people, it seems as if the Church speaks timidly here

when it speaks at all and that it is not meeting the religious demands of the age.

Here then are critics that must be heard. Here are criticisms which must be met. For they concern the very life of the Church, and its message to the world. It is the aim of this book to deal frankly with these considerations which make an unreserved and enthusiastic Church loyalty difficult for many people. It is the conviction of the writer that if they are all faced, with a full regard for all the facts, and in a spirit which is both honest and humble, patient and courageous, men and women whose lives are really bent on righteousness will find themselves turning with increasing gratitude and loyalty to the Church, without whose inspiration our modern world, with all its other possessions, would find itself hopelessly bereft.

Chapter II

ARE CHURCHES NECESSARY?

The question is being asked in all seriousness. It is asked with such seriousness that one of the most urgent problems in the religious world is how to answer it so as to make men see and feel the need and worth of the Christian Church as an institution.[1]

Of course, if one is to believe in the Church, one must first of all have some positive convictions of the value of religion. For the primary concern of the Church is religion. One may believe in the reasonableness and necessity of religion without believing in the Church; but one cannot believe in the Church without seeing the necessity, and admitting the worth of religion. It is at this point, therefore, that our discussion must begin.

It will not be necessary, however, to argue at length the place of religion in the personal and social life, for most thoughtful people find their way into affirmative convictions on this subject as their experience deepens and broadens. Whatever may be one's theoretical difficulties about religion at the beginning of one's thinking life, as that life goes on, and its burdens and problems press more and more heavily upon him, one turns instinctively to the sources of strength which a religious faith alone is able to supply. It is in experience, if anywhere, that men find God. And it is experience that leads most men to God. Whatever may be the difficulties of belief, sooner or later most people discover that the difficulties of unbelief are even greater.

This discovery was made in an impressive way by the thinkers of a generation now gone, who felt that the birth of a new scientific conception of the world meant the abandonment of the religious faith in which they had been reared. As one reads their letters and their biographies, one is made aware how these strong thinkers

[1] See Joseph Henry Crooker: "The Church of Today," ch. 1.

and militant spirits came themselves to feel the immense spiritual damage resulting from a virtual negation of the concepts of religion. It was, indeed, a melancholy loneliness which befell them:

> "They have taken away our Lord,
> They have shattered the one great Hope,
> They have left us alone to cope
> With our terrible selves.
> The strength of Immortal Love,
> The comfort that millions keep,
> Prayer, and the Cross we adored,—
> All is lost! There is no one above.
> We are left like the beasts that creep—
> They have taken away our Lord."

"I am not ashamed to confess," wrote Romanes when he was in the midst of his struggle, "that with this virtual negation of God, the universe has lost the soul of its loveliness. [There is] an appalling contrast between the hallowed glory of that creed that once was mine and the lonely mystery of existence as now I find it." . . . "There is a vacuum in the soul of man which nothing can fill save faith in God."[2]

It was a similar experience which caused Clifford to write: "Far be it from me to undervalue the help and strength which many of the bravest of our brethren have drawn from the thought of an unseen Helper of men. He who, wearied or stricken in the fight with the powers of darkness, asks himself in a solitary place, 'Is it all for nothing? shall we indeed be overthrown?'—does find something which may justify that thought. In such a moment of utter sincerity, when a man has bared his own soul before the immensities and the eternities, a presence in which his own poor personality is shriveled into nothingness arises within him, and says, as plainly as words can say, 'I am with thee, and I am greater than thou.' Many names of Gods, of many shapes, have men given to this Presence; seeking by names and pictures to know more clearly and to remember more continually the guide and the helper of men. No such comradeship with the Great Companion shall have anything but reverence from me."[3]

The last august word in Spencer's autobiography is one of infinite sadness: "Behind these mysteries lies the all-embracing mystery, whence this universal transformation

[2] "Thoughts on Religion," 1895, pp. 29, 162.

[3] William K. Clifford, "Lectures and Essays," 1886, p. 386.

which has gone on unceasingly through a past eternity, and will go on unceasingly throughout a future eternity. And along with this arises the paralyzing thought, What if, of all that is thus incomprehensible to us, there exists no comprehension anywhere? No wonder that men take refuge in authoritative dogma!—Thus religious creeds which in one way or another occupy the sphere that rational interpretation seeks to occupy and fails, and fails the more it seeks. I have come to regard them with a sympathy based on community of need; feeling that dissent from them comes from inability to accept the solutions offered, joined with the wish that solutions could be found."[4]

Lafcadio Hearn frankly admitted the difficulty he felt in facing a denial of all religion: "Surely, as you say, it were better for Japan to have any civilized religion than none,—and the danger is that of having none. You can't imagine how many compositions I get containing such words as—'Is there a God?—I don't know'—which, strange as it may seem to you, doesn't rejoice me at all. I am agnostic, atheist, anything theologians like to call me; but what a loss to the young mind of eighteen or twenty years must be the absence of all that sense of reverence and tenderness which the mystery of the infinite gives. Religion has been very much to me, and I am still profoundly religious in a vague way. It will be a very ugly world when the religious sense is dead in all children."[5] Similarly, Henry Sidgwick, the great Cambridge scholar, has written: "I firmly believe that religion is normal to mankind and therefore take part unhesitatingly in any social action to adopt and sustain it. . . . I believe that many persons are really faithful to themselves in being irreligious. . . . If I have any complaint against them, it is not that they do not believe in a God, but that they are content with, happy in, a universe where there is no God; but many of them are not content. . . ."[6]

Huxley, in one of his letters to Mr. Morley, makes this admission: "It is a curious thing that I find my dislike

[4] An autobiography of Herbert Spencer, 1904, Vol. 2, pp. 548–549. "And I am not frivolous when I say that you and I need nothing more than a religious faith of some kind." Letters of Franklin K. Lane, pp. 396–7.

[5] "Japanese Letters of Lafcadio Hearn," 1910, p. 252.

[6] Henry Sidgwick, A Memoir by A. S. and E. M. S., 1906, pp. 227, 228.

to the thought of extinction increasing as I get older and nearer the goal. It flashes across me at all times with a sort of horror that in 1900 I shall probably know no more of what is going on in the world than I did in 1800. I had sooner be in hell a good deal—at any rate in one of the upper circles of it.—I wonder if you are plagued in this way?"[7] What has been called the Return of Faith in our generation has been achieved not only by the discovery that there are no inherent contradictions between the concepts of science and of faith, but by the even deeper discovery that the concepts of faith are essential to normal human living.

Akin to this is the discovery that religion is necessary for what we call social welfare: that it is one of the strongest bonds that hold men together. It is the invisible foundation upon which human society may be said to rest.[8] All students of sociology recognize this. It was the weakening of the structure of social organization by the practical abandonment of religion at the close of the French Revolution, which caused the Breton peasants to inscribe upon their banners the motto: "Give us back our God." Some years ago, when there was much discussion of the unwholesome social conditions in rural New England, Charles Eliot Norton declared that what New England needed was a revival of Puritan theology. And at the close of the chapter on Religious Conditions in America in his "American Commonwealth," James Bryce thus states the place of religion in a Democracy: "So sometimes standing in the midst of a great American city, and watching the throngs of eager figures streaming hither and thither, marking the sharp contrasts of poverty and wealth, an increasing mass of wretchedness and an increasing display of luxury, knowing that before long a hundred

[7] Life and Letters of Thomas Huxley by his son, Leonard Huxley, 1900, Vol. 2, p. 67.

[8] For a full and helpful discussion of this subject, see C. A. Ellwood, "The Reconstruction of Religion," Ch. II, "The Social Significance of Religion"; p. 35, "We have no record of a civilization which long endured which did not have this religious setting for its mores; nor of any one which endured long after this setting was dissolved"; p. 64, "The death of religion would accordingly mean the death of all higher civilization"; p. 67, "If humanitarian ethics is to succeed in overcoming the conflicts between classes, nations and races which are now tearing asunder the world, it must have the support of a religion of humanity."

million of men will be living between ocean and ocean under this one government,—a government which their own hands have made and which they feel to be the work of their own hands,—one is startled by the thought of what might befall this huge yet delicate fabric of laws and commerce and social institutions were the foundations it has rested on to crumble away. Suppose that all these men ceased to believe that there was any power above them, any future before them, anything in heaven or on earth except what their senses told them of; suppose that their consciousness of individual force and responsibility already dwarfed by the overwhelming power of the multitude and the fatalistic spirit it engenders, were further weakened by the feeling that their swiftly fleeting life was rounded by a perpetual sleep. . . . Would the moral code stand unshaken and with it the reverence for law, the sense of duty towards the community and even towards the generations yet to come? Would men say, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die'? . . . History, if she cannot give us a complete answer to this question, tells us that hitherto civilized society has rested on religion, and that free government has prospered best among religious peoples. . . . Religion and conscience have been a constantly active force in the American Commonwealth. . . . The more democratic republics become, the more the masses grow conscious of their power, the more do they need to live not only by patriotism but by reverence and self-control, and the more essential to their well-being are those sources whence reverence and self-control flow."[9]

Dean Inge, also, bears similar testimony: "If I were asked to state in one word the cause of the failure of our civilization, I should answer 'Secularism.' There must surely be some very deep ground for the universal discontent and malaise which have overtaken Western civilization. There is but little happiness and content anywhere, and the reason is that we have lost faith in the values which should be the motive force of social life."[10]

For these reasons the place of religion, and, because for us Christianity is the highest form of religion, the place of Christianity, in the personal and social life of our modern world is generally recognized and admitted.

[9] James Bryce, "The American Commonwealth," Vol. 2, pp. 598, 599.

[10] Dean Inge, "Outspoken Essays," Second Series, pp. 148–9, 156.

This does not necessarily mean, however, that the right of the Church to a place in the personal and social life is also recognized and admitted. For the distinction between the religion of Jesus and the Church of Jesus is perfectly valid and very important. One may be interested in the one, and not be interested in the other. One may feel the importance of the Christian Idea without feeling the importance of the institution in which that Idea finds its visible embodiment. Pure Christianity is one thing, and the Christianity of the churches is admittedly another. The one is the Ideal. The other is only a human approximation to that Ideal. If, therefore, one is to be loyal to the Church, that loyalty must be felt and won with the frank recognition that the Church to which that loyalty is given will reflect and illustrate but imperfectly the religious ideas to which it witnesses and the spirit of Christ of which it is the embodiment.

At this point, however, it is necessary to take into account the fact that this contrast is not peculiar to the institution of religion. Every ideal suffers in this human expression of it. Patriotism is surely one thing, and the political institutions in which that ideal is incorporated are certainly another. Yet that contrast has not prevented the purest patriots from identifying themselves with the political organizations of their day. Educational ideals are admittedly one thing, and the school systems actually in operation are another. On that account, however, our best educators do not refuse to work through the system that exists. The purpose of industry has been defined as "the conquest of nature in the service of man."[11] That purpose has been perverted by many business men but this fact does not mean that those who believe in the principle should cease to be men of business. The ideals of the labour movement are one thing, and its actual operations are often another. Not on that account, however, do idealists withhold their allegiance. There must be, that is, some allowance made by theoretical idealism in order to attain the organization necessary to practical action. The Church is no exception to this rule. An unorganized Christianity could never do the work or win the battles of the Lord.

It is precisely here, however, that many pause when they are considering their relation to the Christian Church. Convinced of the importance of the Christian Idea in their

[11] R. H. Tawney, "The Acquisitive Society," p. 84.

own lives, persuaded that society needs the stabilizing and humanizing influence of religion if it is to remain sound and wholesome, they hesitate to declare their allegiance to the institution because they feel that it incorporates those ideas so incompletely and imperfectly.

There is no mistaking the fact that "the general modern judgment is adverse to institutionalism in religion. In spite of the enormous improvement in the average ecclesiastical attitude and in the average church service compared with a hundred years ago, the sense that religion involves the [acceptance] of the rules and discipline of an organized society; that definite spiritual gains are attached to incorporation in such a society; that churchgoing and formal corporate worship is a normal or necessary part of a good life, has weakened and actually ceased in multitudes of thoughtful people."[12] Religion is conceived of as a purely individual affair. People accept the well-known definition of religion by William James whether they ever heard of it or not: "Religion shall mean for us the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the Divine."[13] It is these solitary feelings, acts, experiences, which men value today. But they do not value highly enough that incorporation and illustration of them which they find in the Church. They listen sympathetically to Mr. H. G. Wells, when he writes: "The history of Christianity, with its encrustation and suffocation in dogmas and usages, its dire persecutions of the faithful by the unfaithful, its desiccation and its unlovely decay, its invasion by robes and rites and all the tricks and vices of the Pharisees whom Christ detested and denounced, is full of warning against the dangers of a Church."[14]

Without doubt, the Church may be the source of danger. There is danger, that is, in every attempt to embody a spirit in visible form, and to put an ideal to work in an institution admittedly human.[15] Like every human institution, the Church depends for its success upon the men and women who compose it, and these—in the Church as in the state—are fallible and sinful. Dante, good Catholic

[12] Evelyn Underhill, "The Life of the Spirit and the Life of Today," pp. 156–7.
[13] "Varieties of Religious Experience," Lecture II, p. 31.
[14] "God, the Invisible King," p. 164.
[15] See Hugh Walpole, "The Cathedral," pp. 419, 420.

as he was, found room for more than one Pope in hell. Harnack, from the Protestant side, has summed up his view of the situation in the pregnant sentence: "Where there is a church there is always a little bit of the world." That is, we shall never have a perfect Church on earth, since, if it were perfect, it would not be on earth but in heaven. We ought not in all seriousness to expect an infallible church of fallible people.

The question remains, however, if, great as the danger of a Church doubtless is, the danger would not be greater without it.[16] If there is peril in putting our treasure into earthen vessels, would not the peril be greater were our treasure put in no vessel at all? It may be that "Christian officialdom tends to stifle the Christian spirit," but one wonders what would become of it without some sort of officialdom. What is needed, therefore, is a frank and thorough investigation of the value to men of the institution of religion. Here the ordinary defense of the Church will not suffice. The persuasion which alone will meet the issue must rest upon deep-seated and well apprehended psychological and historical grounds.

The psychological approach to this problem demands a fair facing of the question "What does a Church really do, or what can it do, for a God-desiring individual?"[17] What gains come to him as a loyal member of a group of God-desiring individuals, which he could not acquire in solitude? In what way does a community of persons who have a common sentiment of belief, a common reverence for God, a common defined aim, make for a furtherance of the spiritual life of the individual member?

In the first place, association in worship seems to keep one's spiritual life and outlook from becoming one-sided, eccentric, peculiar to oneself. Thrown in with others, our spiritual ideas become more developed and inclusive, our sympathies more human. Here is one of the greatest services rendered by the Church to the individual. We have all known many downright religious and spiritually-minded people outside the Church, but it is the human quality which comes and can come only by association in

[16] See Willard L. Sperry, "The Disciplines of Liberty," pp. 158, 162, and W. E. Hocking, "Human Nature and Its Remaking," pp. 177–225.

[17] Evelyn Underhill, ibid., p. 162. The reader is referred to the whole of Chapter V: "The Life of the Spirit and Institutional Religion." By permission. Copyright, E. P. Dutton & Co.

spiritual things with those who differ widely from ourselves, which we so often miss in them. Thus a great ecclesiastical scholar of our day has written: "The more the educated and intellectual partake with sympathy of heart in the ordinary devotions and pious practices of the poor, the higher they will rise in the religion of the spirit."[18] This was one of Theodore Roosevelt's well-known reasons for church-going: the opportunity offered by it to join with his fellows in the worship of God. There is a richness, a warmth, a human quality in the spiritual experience of the church goer, that warrants us in asserting that there is a genuine loss at this point to the unchurched. It is similar to life in a family: always opportunity for humility, self-effacement, forbearance is held before one. "Love must be joined with power and sound mind if the full life of the spirit is to be attained."[19]

In the next place one gets discipline, and discipline is necessary in religion as in anything else. As Miss Underhill says, neither history nor psychology suggest that "amiable fluidity" serves the highest purposes of life. But, if lived outside of a group with its rules and its discipline, that is what the religious life of many people tends to become. Dean Inge in a sermon at St. Paul's has made the same suggestion: "Now it is a chief value of religious institutions that they introduce a measure of law and of discipline into what otherwise tends to become—and, except in the strongest religious spirits, I think actually does become—a somewhat fluid religious life."[20] That is, if one is at liberty to pray anywhere, he actually prays nowhere; because he says he is free to worship at any time, he worships at no time. His religious life is singularly without rails, direction, momentum. As Dean Inge goes on to say: "In our generation the volume of discipline has been greatly relaxed. We see everywhere a growing contempt for all rule and tradition. As a result . . . we are becoming a self-indulgent, self-loving people, impatient of all restraint, averse from all discipline." And nowhere is this tendency more clearly marked than in the case of the religious habits. There is a real danger. But if one allies oneself with a religious group, this self-indulgence is brought up with a round turn.

One of the best, most practical ways of recovering

[18] Dom Cuthbert Butler, Hibbert Journal, 1906, p. 502.
[19] See Chapter X, p. 202.
[20] Christian World Pulpit, March 2, 1922.

discipline and order in our religious life is to become loyal members of a church group, and to obey its rules and its discipline. It makes short shift of laziness; it introduces, at once, some semblance of order, of regularity, of continuity, and it makes, at least, some demands on self-denial and self-sacrifice. We are accustomed to pity the anchorites and to deprecate the asceticism which they practised. We may well ask ourselves if we have not drifted to the opposite extreme, and if the Church, therefore, does not offer us a much needed method of discipline. The rules of a Loyola, and the daily exercises of a St. Catherine, it may not be for us to imitate; but it is a fair question if we can form and keep a strong religious nature without rules and exercises of any kind.

A third gain to the religious life of the individual from association with a group in a Church is the easily verifiable fact that "ordinary people at all levels help each other to be a little more supernatural than each could have been alone."[21] To be supernatural is at least one great need, if not the one great need of our lives. By that, of course, is meant feeling God directly, having a sense of immediate communion with God, a receiving of the spiritual life in all of its mystery and beauty and splendour. That is the great need. The question is, how to get it. And the plain fact is that most people experience it more often and more fully when they are together than when they are alone. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." By "two or three" is not meant a few, but a multiple of one.

The reasons for this spiritual law are given by religious psychology. The fact is that men are swayed and moved by the power of suggestion, of sympathy, of imitation, and only reach full development in their group experiences. Incorporation in a group, therefore, plays a part in worship which nothing solitary can replace. Goodness and devotion are more easily caught than taught, and caught by association in groups. Then and there everything conspires to raise the spirit of devotion in the individual. There is the place, rich in memory and association, literally bathed in prayer, ministering through the eye and ear to the dormant worshipping instinct. There is the special atmosphere, the hoarded beauty. There we are brought into contact with holy and strong souls, both living and dead, who make it easier for us to be holy and strong. The

[21] Evelyn Underhill, ibid., p. 168. By permission. Copyright, E. P. Dutton & Co

prayerful attitude, the real faith, the evident reverence and sincerity of fellow church members help one to pray better and, what is more, to believe more intensely in the efficiency of the prayers that one offers. The ritual of historic Christianity comes to our aid. The music with its rhythmic character, the recited prayers, the creed, these all urge the mind in the same direction.[22]

Of course any one, if he so will, can resist all this. Any one can keep on the outside of it; any one can preserve the attitude of the spectator or the critic; but only in the degree that he becomes a simple, humble, contrite-hearted child of God by putting off his critical harness and his intellectual apparatus[23] and yields himself to these invisible but potent influences, does any one get a glimpse of the Eternal, a feeling of Eternity which he can receive in no other way. "The great thing is that by these corporate practices and surrenders, we can prevent that terrible freezing up of the deep wells of our being which so easily comes to those who must lead an exacting material or intellectual life."[23] Common worship offers first aid to the careless or callous.

The second approach to the question of the spiritual gains which come only through association in religion is the historical approach. Here we are impressed with the fact that whoever looks at the matter from the point of view of history, discovers that religion never has been a solitary affair. Upon examination, as Miss Underhill declares,[24] that supposed solitariness has turned out to be an illusion. Whoever examines history with care finds two tendencies: first there is the solitary vision and experience of sage and seer and prophet: but, side by side with it, another tendency to organize into communities and societies living under sanctions and rules. These two tendencies all through history act and react upon each other. The religious communities and organizations tend to become formal and official; the spirit of religion tends to leave them. Then great and arresting religious personalities arise who either revolt from them, or re-form and rekindle them from within.

Thus Amos and Isaiah tried to break up the formalism

[22] By permission from Evelyn Underhill, ibid., p. 174. Copyright, E. P. Dutton & Co.

[23] See "Culture and Religion," by J. C. Shairp, p. 127; (2) Evelyn Underhill, ibid., p. 176.

[24] Evelyn Underhill, ibid., p. 154.

into which the Old Testament theocracy had fallen in their time. Jesus in His turn protested against Pharisaism. Later, many Roman Catholic mystics, and after them, a host of Protestant reformers, revolted against Roman formalism. On the other hand, when the individualist has done his work, the converts to this new freed religious spirit begin at once to coalesce, and to embody it either in new or reformed institutions. Hence arose the Early Church and the Church of the Reformation.

Now what deduction is to be drawn from this broad and permanent witness of history? Is it not this: that both these elements must be essential to what we call the religious needs of humanity. It is a truism that religious institutions tend to degenerate, to become mechanical, to tyrannize. Although the point is not at all so generally admitted, is it not equally a truism that without the stabilizing and preservative influence of religious institutions, the religion of pure spirit would tend to evaporate or at least would fail to articulate itself in forms of practical spiritual energy?

Religion, that is, if it is to be a real, permanent and effective form of spiritual influence, needs to be rooted in the past, and to have acquired traditions and habits. If religious history proves that institutions tend to go stale, it also proves that the spiritual life does not flourish in an atmosphere of pure individualism; that unless the free movement toward novelty, and the fresh levels of pure experience are balanced by the stability given by hoarded tradition and habits, it will degenerate into eccentricity and fail of its full good effect.[25] The spirit of religion demands some incarnation, some place in history, some social outlet, some fixed discipline and tradition. The careful historical student will discover that the history of the soul has two sides: solitary vision or revelation, and then some incorporation of that vision in the actual life of the world. It will seem therefore to him that the advocates of individual and of corporate religion are both right, and that if his own religious experience is to be normal, it will include them both.

[25] In this connection, the following quotation from the letter of a college student has meaning: "I have come to have a new respect for traditions. I've come to see they are more than just something to smash, and why the lack of the stabilizing effects which traditions produce have brought such havoc among certain groups I know."

They were both included in the religious attitude of Jesus, a fact which is often overlooked. The religion of Jesus was a solitary affair, but not exclusively solitary. He recognized His debt to the religious institutions into which the "splendid oracles" of the Hebrew prophets had been incorporated which had preserved inviolate the Jewish faith through centuries of persecution. He knew that the Jewish synagogue had proved a most successful instrument for the spiritualization of human life and for the perpetuation of those traditions which constituted the foundation for the Gospel which He had come to preach. Hence, He went steadily to the worship of the synagogue. His attitude toward contemporary religious institutions displays a perfect combination of criticism and loyalty. From this point of view, it is difficult to see how anyone can be said to be living the religion of Jesus unless his religion also is more than a solitary affair.

In this connection, also, it is well to remember that historical Christianity has, from the first, been more than a private opinion, or a personal conviction, or a spiritual ideal. From the beginning, it has been a corporate life, an organized force, a common spiritual purpose for definite and practical ends. In this sense, at least, it is possible to affirm that Christ founded the Church. He was not content, that is, to announce a Gospel, or to proclaim a message. He formed groups of individuals to whom He entrusted the message, and to them He gave the specific commission to teach and to preach it and to carry it to the ends of the earth. Those groups of early disciples did not wholly comprehend His teaching; and so they did not teach it in its fullness, nor illustrate it perfectly in their lives. But, in them and through them, Christianity began to take root in human society and to operate as a social force in the world.

It is significant that nearly every criticism that is leveled at the Church today, can be applied to those primitive church organizations. They too were rent assunder by disputes;[26] they held some narrow, and, to us, even grotesque religious ideas;[27] some of them gave precedence, we are told, to the rich over the poor;[28] others lapsed into indifference and materialism; and still others were more

[26] 2 Cor. 12:20.
[27] 1 Cor. 8:10, Gal. 6:12, 1 Cor. 11:14–15; 1 Thess. 4:16–17.
[28] St. James. 2:2–3.

dead than alive.[29] Whole books in the New Testament were written to rejuvenate and to revive church organizations that seemed to have little or no breath of life left in them. All of this happened before the end of the first century of the Christian era. Yet, in spite of all these imperfections, the service to society performed by these early Christian communities is without parallel in the history of religion. They were the nucleus and starting point of a new era in the evolution of the human spirit. They succeeded in planting a new religious and social ideal in the soil of the Cæsars. They kindled a new hope in the heart of humanity. They laid the foundation of the new social order to be, while the foundations of the old were slowly crumbling into ruins.

The life of these early Christian churches has recently been made the object of a minute study by a great German scholar.[30] His conclusion is that the Church won its victory over the Roman Empire because it demonstrated that there was power in it to make men good, and to make men of good will. It caused men actually to live lives of austere morality and of human kindness in the midst of an immoral and cruel world. The apologists point triumphantly to the realization of the moral ideal in the personal life among Christians of all classes. In the midst of an old dying world, this new world springs up with a new social hope enshrined in its heart. An admittedly imperfect Church, that is, actually did this work of personal and social salvation.

It is not necessary to recount the shortcomings of the mediaeval Church. They are familiar to us all. Not so familiar, however, is the record of the indispensable service which the mediaeval Church, in spite of its shortcomings, rendered to the disorganized society of its day. Dr. J. N. Figgis has pointed this out: "When all reservations have been made, there can be little doubt that it is right to treat the growth of political ideas, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as a branch of ecclesiastical history. With few exceptions, religion or the interests of some religious body gave the motive for the political thought of the period.[31] The struggle went on within the Church

[29] Rev. 3:16.

[30] Ernst von Dobschütz, "Christian Life in the Primitive Church," pp. 378–9.

[31] See "From Gerson to Grotius," Introduction, p. 36. Also "The Political Aspects of S. Augustine's 'City of God.'"

that gave birth to political liberty and secular politics as we know them.

To that struggle the modern student needs to turn for the beginnings of the conceptions of such modern principles as the contractual theory of government, public right, the sovereignty of the state, and even the conception of international relationships. Gasquet in his "England in the Reign of Henry III" devotes one or two chapters to the value of the Papacy as a check upon unbridled nationalism; while the canon law, the international institution of the Papacy and the monastic orders, whether itinerant or stationary, not only helped to keep the nations from open strife, but helped them to think and act together. Of this the First Crusade is a dramatic witness. It is well for us to remember that those modern political and religious ideas with which we are most familiar, were wrought out for us in the heart and conscience of the Church.

One more illustration may suffice. No one can read the story of the early New England Church without the discovery that one does not find oneself, as is often imagined, in a kind of ecclesiastical paradise. Whoever really goes back to "the good old days" of John Higginson, finds him preaching in Salem that the cause of a pure religion "is exceeding decaying and expiring in this country." So, also, Cotton Mather declares that "the body of the rising generation is a poor perishing, unconverted, and except the Lord God pour down His spirit, an undone generation." In those "good old days," the Congregationalists of Massachusetts and the Episcopalians of Virginia tried to set up a State Church supported by a public tax. In those days, only Church members were allowed to vote at town meeting; witches were hanged in Salem and heretics and Quakers were harried out of Massachusetts. Many a meeting-house was built in the city of New York out of funds secured in a public lottery. Liquor was a regular item of expense at church ordinations, and "as late as 1833, Lyman Beecher bewailed it as an intolerable calamity that people of a different religious persuasion from his own were not compelled to contribute to his salary."[32] Surely here is the picture of a Church which falls far short of any ideal worth discussing.

Yet the veriest tyro in the history of the American

[32] See H. E. Fosdick, "Heckling the Church," Atlantic Monthly.

colonies is aware of the enormous influence exerted by the Church in laying the foundations of the American Commonwealth. That work could not have been done apart from the institutions of religion. It was done not by the spirit of Christianity alone, but by that spirit incorporated in a religious system that was adequate to the social needs of the early colonists. The Church built the towns, erected responsible government, planted the schools, taught the Indians, extended the frontiers, and created the traditions which remain today as the bulwark of our liberties.

What has been set down here has not been written to gloss over or to minimize the defects of modern institutional Christianity, or to question the sincerity of those who are led by their understanding and interpretation of Christianity, not toward the Church, but away from it. There is, however, something which may justly be urged against the religious individualism of our day. Whoever says that "Christianity is one thing and the Church another" has uttered a half-truth. He has failed, that is, to define his Christianity. If he means by Christianity the Christian Idea, independent of its historical setting and operation, he is right. But if he means Christianity as we find it in the New Testament and on the broad field of human experience and action, he is wrong. And in his revolt against the "religious professionals" and "the spiritual sterility of the churches," he is likely to overlook the gains in corporate continuity and consciousness which overtop the losses. The fact is that the Church today actually has a tremendous hold upon masses of people. This historic continuity, with its roster of heroes and martyrs, gives background and atmosphere to our spiritual life: "An hereditary foundation of revered memories, ideas, habits, sentiments, associations, deep-rooted in the heart."[33]

It is really no use to say, Let us do away with the Church. No sooner were this done, than, as Bernard Shaw has said, men would begin to build another. What likelihood is there that it would be superior to the Church which the ages have put in our midst?[34] This is said to

[33] Durant Drake: "Shall We Stand by the Church"? p. 16.

[34] "If any one has fault to find with the Church, and thinks it of no use, let him consider how deeply rooted its needs are in the nature of man. It cannot be destroyed. If it comes to an end in one form, it springs up anew in another. Cut down the old trunk, new shoots spring up from the root. It cannot

those who look upon the Church as of human origin and workmanship. To those who think of it as St. Paul did, as the Body of Christ, the divinely authenticated and appointed Instrument of His mind and will, no such assurance will be needed. For such a conception of the Church and its mission lifts one above the incomplete and temporary aspects of its life and supports the faith that one day it will become "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing."[35]

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be destroyed; for some sort of a church is needed by man for his moral life, growth, peace, comfort." James Freeman Clarke, "Common Sense in Religion," p. 244.

[35] Eph. 5:27.

CHAPTER III

WHERE IS THE CHURCH TODAY?

In his own characteristic fashion, Robert Louis Stevenson once expressed the wish that he had someone to put him in good heart about life. There are few of us who have not felt at times the need that we be put in good heart about the Church. No one can be really enthusiastic about any cause that is felt to be on the decline, or about an institution that is felt to be superfluous, or about an organization that the moral progress of mankind has left behind. And the press and current literature are so conventionally lugubrious on the subject of the present status and outlook of the Church, that it is no wonder if many have lost heart.

For pessimists abound, as we have seen, both within and without the Church. They labour, of course, under the tremendous disadvantage that nearly all of their opinions and their predictions have been discounted beforehand—by experience. What they are saying today, it is well for us to remember, has been said a thousand times in different forms in every age. And always the event has poured posthumous scorn upon their lament and given it the lie.[1] These prophecies of disaster are as ancient as religion itself and have accompanied it through all its career like a disconsolate and untuneful and futile chorus. All of this talk—which sounds so modern—about the decay of religion and the approaching eclipse of faith, about reeling altars and shrines destined to become desolate,—all this talk is the oldest as well as the newest. The abiding characteristic of the pessimist is his weird persuasion that human faith, expressed in a corporate and visible Church, is as a fashion that will fade. History, especially the history of religion, makes its own derisive and contemptuous comment upon it all. Despite the pessimist's portentous

[1] Principal W. B. Selbie, Christian World Pulpit.

gravity, it crowns him with the cap and bells. Next to real personal belief in God, a knowledge of history is the best corrective of pessimism and of anything approaching it. And if the history of religion tells us anything, it tells us that the Church is here to stay.

In order, however, to put us in good heart about the Church, we have another resource beside the appeal to history. It is the fair appraisement of actual conditions. It is undeniably difficult to be fair when one is discussing the status and outlook of the Church; but most people want to be fair, and it is worth while to make the effort. Some church people are not fair because they are so comfortably settled in their parochial preoccupations that they are not even aware of the great currents of moral idealism in the world which in their scope and insight, their insistence on justice and brotherhood, set a standard which the Church would do well itself to attain. But others are not fair because, in their knowledge of and devotion to these modern movements that make for righteousness, they ignore or underrate the actual position which the Church occupies in our social order, the range of its influence, the virility of its spirit.

It is of these matters that the present chapter deals. To the reader to whom it seems as if this were going over old ground, advancing well-worn and familiar lines of defence for the Church, it can only be said in reply that these things are, and that they ought to be understood by all who desire to be fair. It may also be claimed that they are not an over-familiar note in references to the Church in modern discussion, the prevailing tone of which, as has already been indicated, is all the other way. And that no undue emphasis is laid upon them here, and no exaggerated claims are made because of them, the subsequent discussion, it is hoped, will show.

To begin at the beginning, let us take the familiar subject of church attendance. If everything that is said were true, we should be forced to conclude that only the merest fraction of our population today ever go near a church, and that they belong to the least influential and the least thoughtful part of the community; also, that the contrast between our days and those of our fathers is so striking as to represent virtually a revolution in religious thought and habit.

The facts, however, do not compel us to believe anything of the kind. Everyone understands that the mere habit of church-going is not of itself a sign of ecclesiastical vigour. At certain periods in its history when "everybody" went to church, the Church was probably never less alive. Grant that fifty or a hundred years ago more people, proportionately, attended church than attend today, this of itself would not prove that the Church of a century ago was far in advance of the Church today. Called to choose between the Church of our fathers, with the meeting houses crowded two or even three times a day, but with its restricted understanding of what "the Gospel" means, and the Church of today with its lessened emphasis on church-going and "services," but with its present conception of the meaning of the Christian life, and the enlarged sphere of Christian conduct, would anyone hesitate? Is there any real question which Church, on the whole, is more Christian?

Again, dispassionate study of the fundamental changes which have taken place in our social order during the past half century will incline a reasonable observer to agree with Lyman Abbott, who once said that what most impressed him was that so many people continued to go, and not that so many people stayed away from church. We have witnessed the total disappearance of the social compulsion to attend church. In the early days, a man had not only to go but to be a church member, in order to enjoy his full rights as a citizen. Later on, he must be a church-goer in order to be respectable; and, until quite recently, systematic absence from church meant that he renounced all claims to be considered religious, to say nothing of being Christian. But today a man may never enter a church from one year's end to the other and still find his standing as a citizen is not affected in the slightest degree. And a sharpened Christian conscience may even regard him as a more truly "religious" man than his neighbour who never misses a church service. The removal, in a word, of the social constraint has meant the elimination of all who have had any other motive for attending church except the motives of religion itself. This loss has been in the interest of spiritual religion. For it is not a good thing that one's relation to the Church should depend upon its value as a social convention, or that men should ever be tempted to profess religion from

non-religious or from irreligious motives. From this point of view, a reduction in the number of church-goers can hardly be accounted a setback either to religion or to the Church itself.

Moreover, the place which the Church occupies in the midst of our modern social order is in some respects very different from what it was formerly. It used to be the main source of secular culture and information for the mass of people. It was the only centre of social recreation and acquaintance. Men went up to it not only to meet with God but with one another. But that day has long since passed. Schools and lectures, the libraries and the press, clubs and social organizations give men today what the Church alone was able to give a century ago. Add to this the vast changes which have taken place in modern life: the increase in wealth and means of enjoyment; the immense drift of population to the cities with consequent loss of church attachment and interest; the operation of economic and industrial law which tends to make vagrants of millions of men and deprive them of the settled home life upon which the habit of steady church-going depends; and one is prepared to find a diminution in church attendance without inferring from it a decadent Church.

Again, an even deeper explanation of non-church-going is to be found in the mind of the age. For several generations now we have been producing a type of man whose interests are mainly in the external things of life. The amazing advances in physical science during the Victorian Age, accustoming us to values expressible in terms of what can be measured and weighed, have made one less sensitive to the meaning of "things not seen." Before many men will appraise the Church at its real worth, it will be necessary that they themselves come into possession of a new sense of the relative values of life.

Yet in spite of all of these factors, it may be said that there is no habit in America more general or more characteristic of our civilization as a whole than the habit of church-going.[2] Generalizations on this subject are, of course, as worthless on the one side as on the other. That "nobody goes to church any more" is as empty a statement as that "nearly everybody" goes. The truth, of

[2] See William Adams Brown, "The Church in America," pp. 25–26.

course, lies between the two extremes. Which end it lies the nearer is the question. But beneath the lament that the churches are empty,—and they are not,—is often the assumption that other centres of idealism and culture are crowded,—and they are not. When such comparisons are made, it is astonishing what a showing the Church makes. At least, there seems to be no necessary reason why at this point one should be in an obituary mood about the Church.

Statistics are, of course, not the best proof of the worth of any organization. The fact that it raises so much money or so many people belong to it does not answer the question of its real worth to society. If this is true of organizations in general, it is particularly true of the Church. Still, figures are not altogether worthless. Figures do mean something when we are discussing the Church. At least they indicate some measure of popular interest. When people spend money for other things we usually infer that they are interested in these things. If people spend money on the Church it is a fair inference that they are interested in the Church. When we read, therefore,[3] that the value of Church property in the United States in 1880 was $679,426,489, and that in 1906 it was $1,257,575,867, and that in 1916 it was $1,676,600,582, these figures mean something. When we read further that Protestant Church members, alone, during a single year contributed more than $400,000,000 to their churches, these figures mean something also. None of these vast sums were raised by taxation. Neither were they raised by any method of ecclesiastical extortion. They were the free gifts of the people. They were contributed voluntarily by the people over, and above, all their other expenses to churches. If there were a steady diminution of the interest of the people in the Church, would not a shrinking in the amounts which the people were willing to pay for their churches be likely? On the contrary, these sums are advancing steadily year after year.[4]

[3] Report U. S. Census Bureau, Religious Bodies, 1916, Part I, p. 45.

[4] See "Year Book of the Churches," published for the Federal Council of Churches, Washington, D. C., p. 397, where the total amount raised in 1922 is stated to be $518,317,578.

A similar situation is true with respect to church membership. Here also one can place a false emphasis upon figures. It is certainly true that the chief business of the Church today is not to make more members, but to make more Christians. Still, a falling off in popular faith in the Church would surely be evidenced by a falling off of its membership. The membership in the churches of the United States, however, has been increasing with every decade in proportion to the population.[6] A compilation of Church membership on the basis of the latest reports of the United States Census shows a total of 47,407,251 men, women and children on the membership lists of churches in the United States. In 1890 the Church membership was 34% of the population, and in 1922 it was 45%. The first church census, taken in 1890 under a special Act of Congress, showed a total membership of 21,699,432 individuals out of a total population of 62,947,714. Sixteen years later, the Church total had risen to 35,068,058 out of a population of about 84,000,000, and ten years later, the Church membership increased to 41,926,854 out of an estimated population of 108,000,000. Of this total, 15,721,815 are Roman Catholics, and from this number about 15% should be deducted for infants and young children who are included in the Roman Catholic statistics. During the year 1921–1922, the churches of the United States gained 967,603 members over the preceding year. These figures mean that each day during the year an average of 2,650 persons became church members, by far the best gains numerically in recent years, and approximately 50% greater than the average for the preceding five years. After a careful survey of Church allegiance as revealed by the Census, Mr. Edwin M. Bliss of the United States Census Bureau concludes that there are not over 19,000,000 persons in the United States out of a population of over 100,000,000 who are "not vitally connected with the Church," and, as he adds, it is incorrect to infer that the majority of these people without Church connections are opposed to or uninterested in the Church.

At any rate, it is difficult to make out that a Church is steadily losing the confidence and support of the people which for each year in the past twenty steadily gains in

[6] See "Year Book of the Churches," 1923, pp. 397–399. The latest government statistics are for 1916.

the number of its ministers, churches, and communicants.[6] Of interest to those who may have the idea that the vast majority of church membership consists of women and children are the figures of the United States Census Bureau,[7] which show that in 1916 only 12.8% of the total membership consists of children under 13 years of age, and these figures include the Roman Catholic returns in which every baptized child is reckoned as a Church member; and, further, that 43.9% of the total are male and 56.1% female. Contrary to certain opinions, held chiefly by those who have not kept closely informed concerning church life in recent years, the number of laymen interested in the Church has been steadily increasing.

Still another idea must be abandoned by those who are willing to give any weight whatever to statistical evidence. The reports in circulation that the educated youth of our land are drifting away from the Church in increasing numbers find no support in the actual returns, which indicate that 77% of the students in 54 state colleges were members of some church. The proportion of church members in denominational and independent colleges in the country is even higher. Here the average proportion of communicants was found to be 86.7% of the total enrollment. These figures take on added significance when connected with the statistics of the Church at large. With the entire population estimated at 100,000,000, it follows that while 4 out of every 10 in the general population were church members, 7 out of 10 students in state institutions and 3 out of 4 in all colleges and universities are members of some church.[8] In short, either a remarkable proportion of educated young people make a definite religious choice, or a remarkable proportion of those brought up in a religious environment indicated by church membership attend college. In either case, it would be difficult to show that the Church is losing its hold upon the educated youth of our land. It is perhaps needless to

[6] The following table showing the Church gains for the year 1921–1922 is taken from the Year Book of the Churches, p. 397:

Year	Churches	Ministers	Members	S. Schools	S. S. Members	Total Raised
1922	243,578	214,385	47,407,251	204,464	25,189,419	$518,317,578
1921	233,999	199,331	46,242,130	199,154	23,944,438	488,424,084
1 yr.	9,579	15,054	1,165,121	5,310	1,244,981	$29,983,494

[7] Ibid., pp. 37, 40.

[8] See Bulletin of the Council of Church Boards of Education.

repeat that this is understood to be only a superficial test of the religious attitude of the modern college student. All that is claimed is that here are figures which ought not in all fairness to be ignored.

It is not intended by this parade of statistics to question the fact that much spiritual destitution, unchurched multitudes, and many feeble and ineffective churches still exist. The figures prove only, in so far as figures can prove anything, that the Church is not retreating in the face of many adverse conditions before the advancing tides of population. On the contrary, it is gaining, year by year, in resources and in adherents.

There are other and better ways, however, of putting us in good heart about the Church as it exists today. Let one make his own mental reservations concerning the attitude of the Church toward modern problems, and its lack of intellectual and spiritual reality, and seek to be just in his appraisal of its value just as it stands to modern society. For one thing, such a critic will think of the preventive work of the Church in relation to crime and lawlessness. This is one of the most urgent problems of our time. Lawlessness in the United States has made our country a byword among the nations.[9] More murders occur in a single American city within a year than in whole European nations.[10] Child crime throughout the country has reached such proportions as to arouse the concern of state and federal authorities. And the crimes with which boys and girls are charged and many of them convicted are not trivial offenses, but organized banditry and burglary. All observers agree that means must be found to check and control these juvenile delinquencies or the next generation will become a generation of lawlessness.

The whole country has lately been bewildered by outbreaks of lawlessness so savage, so murderous, as to make men wonder if our so-called civilization is not a mere veneer. The riots at Herrin and Mer Rouge are still

[9] In 1922, according to a special report of the American Bar Association, there were 7,850 murders in the United States and 6,790 cases of manslaughter, making a total of 14,640 cases of unjustifiable homicide, as contrasted with 17 in the whole city of London.

[10] See Raymond B. Fosdick: "The Crime Wave in America," The New Republic.

fresh in men's minds. Such outbreaks witness to a weakness in the national character so serious as to arouse the gravest concern. The habit of unlegalized executions, commonly called lynchings, still continues to our national shame. "America is held up to scorn in the press of both Europe and Asia as the one country which still condones this barbarous, inhuman and un-Christian practice."[11] Since 1885, on the average more than two persons a week have been put to death by mob violence in this country, and some of them have suffered the most fiendish tortures. No other nation in the world has such a disgraceful record. The enactment of unpopular laws has still further increased the general habit of lawlessness. National prohibition, without question, represents the convictions of the majority of the American people upon the liquor problem. But a minority does not hesitate to disobey the prohibition law and to make its enforcement impossible.[12]

The result is the spread of a general disregard for statute law which constitutes one of the gravest problems of our time. When the heroic qualities of justice, integrity, honesty and respect for law have somehow become so weakened, it takes no gift of prophecy to see that ruin, deep and tragic, will overtake us unless a conscience is shortly developed capable of resisting this decay of these elementary virtues. A moral sense strong enough to guide us safely in stress and strain must be developed,—a moral motive powerful enough to insure a more honest acquisition and more rational use of riches, whether of money, of time, or pleasure. The old-fashioned basic qualities of honour and self-control are everywhere needed again. The paganism of America is no mere fear or fancy, it is real, grim fact.

Everywhere we face the determined unwillingness of individuals to be governed by constituted authority. Does it require any special insight to discern that the Church is needed to supply this ethical development; to evolve a conscience that will be a match for the progress of material development; and enforce the obligations that are inherent in social order, that shall create character able to resist the gigantic temptations of the hour and keep men and women loyal to the highest ideals?

[11] Sherwood Eddy, "Facing the Crisis," p. 167.

[12] See Atlantic Monthly, October, 1923: "What Shall We Do About It?"

From this point of view, even the most confirmed church critics are inclined to look with a sympathetic eye at the churches and their work. Whether or not they feel that they need the Church themselves, they somehow feel that America would not be a safe place to live in without it. For whatever may be said of its defects, it cannot be denied that the Church is a bulwark against crime. Its value to society from this point of view, alone, was well defined by the well-known remark of a former Police Commissioner of New York City, who declared that if the churches of that city should close their doors, there were not constables enough in the United States to keep the peace for twenty-four hours. The Church was never more necessary to society, because human society was never more in need of moral quality. From the sanctuary more than from any other source comes the moral sentiment that must go hand in hand with culture if human life is to be kept sane and sweet. There is no other institution, capable by history, nature, and tradition, of enforcing obedience to this unpalatable but indispensable truth: a regard for law, though it be unpopular or even unjust law. This is the first guarantee of progress. Against crime, the Church can be depended upon to set its face like a flint. Because the Church stands positively for a God who is both Law and Love, it has something to contribute to the present social movement, in fact as well as in theory.

This discussion suggests the value of the Church to modern society as the only institution which makes the explicit teaching of religion its sole business. The need of a more thorough religious education has long been apparent to competent social observers. Our great need is a higher and a better type of character. In order to have a new world, it is first necessary to have new men. As Herbert Spencer once said, we cannot expect to have the Golden Age if people remain like lead. Legislation, international organization, a new social order, these are valueless unless character underlies them all.

The question of religious education is one of the pressing problems of our time, fraught with much difficulty. Yet its continued consideration will cause the place which the Church should occupy in modern society to stand out in clearer outline. With explicit religious teaching barred from the schools, with colleges and universities emphasiz-

ing increasingly learning and method, the educative work of the Church becomes imperative. It alone can devote itself to that elemental side of humanity which religion represents. Let it fail at this task, and the whole structure of society suffers. The most irreligious of statesmen have recognized the truth of this statement. However much they may have judged themselves superior to the need of the religious motive, they have been anxious to maintain the Church for the "masses." This does not mean that they wish it to terrify men into social order and decency by an appeal to their fear of hell, but that the kind of men may be produced by it who will constitute the better environment for which all sociologists plead.

That a purely secular culture cannot do this work is recognized by our foremost educators. Knowledge and a trained mind do not of themselves, that is, make a man a helpful rather than a dangerous member of the community. At a Harvard College commencement some years ago, Theodore Roosevelt, then President of the United States, speaking on precisely this point, excoriated college-trained men who were using their sharpened brains to circumvent the interests of the public to the advantage of their wealthy clients. In his vigorous fashion, he denounced them as dangerous criminals. The low-browed thug, he said, is only the mosquito, but the "high-brow," college-educated, yet unscrupulous lawyer, is the tiger in our jungle. And speaking on the anniversary of a prominent New England church, the President of Williams College used the same language: "We believe that the trained mind becomes a danger and menace unless it is guided, inspired and held to a high character of work by that which the Church seeks to contribute to us all. Secular and religious education must continue in the future as in the past to be fellow-workers if citizenship is to be characterized by purity and high-mindedness." The Church must sanctify the teaching of the college if that teaching is to help to bring us on our way.

The effort to graft a non-sectarian teaching of fundamental morals and religion upon the present school system has been made and will continue to be made. Perhaps it ought to be made. "Some of us," ex-President Eliot has said, "believe that there is a fundamental ethical believing which may justly be called religious, and which conveys all the fundamental motives and all the spiritual powers without being characteristic of any . . . church. How

can we get that kind of religious instruction, ethical instruction, into all our public schools? We shall not make democratic education successful until we have accomplished that object."

This need of a more thorough teaching of religion in the colleges and universities of this country has recently caused the organization of the National Council of Schools of Religion. Prominent laymen from the Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish faiths are interested in the movement, in the hope of filling the gap created by the legal inability of state legislatures to appropriate funds for religious instruction in state universities. These schools, when organized, will be supported by the association, but will rank as regularly established departments of the universities, their courses leading to university credit on a par with courses in other departments. The instruction is designed especially for undergraduates. The schools are not to be training schools for the ministry. They are aimed rather to furnish instruction in religion which may be fitted into an undergraduate curriculum. The subjects will include the Philosophy and Psychology of Religion, History of Religions, Religious Education, Biblical Literature, and the like. The council has already established a number of fellowships to enable the holders to obtain the best possible preparation for their work as instructors in these schools.

Thus the Church is girding itself to this imperative task. Other organizations such as the Religious Education Association and the Institute for the Advancement of Christian Knowledge, bear witness to the same purpose. It is not too much to say that we stand on the threshold of a new era in the development of religious education in the United States. To what degree an explicit teaching of religion can be given in our schools and colleges may be open to question. But no one doubts that this problem will not be solved apart from the Church.

Thus, the need for and opportunity of the Church was never seen in more startling clearness than it is today. The religious teaching of the Church itself will be discussed in a succeeding chapter.

Another service to society which the Church, as it exists today, is rendering in season and out of season, is its work of charity and compassion. The fact that the word "charity" has now been discarded by most social

organizations because of its unfortunate implications, is the very reason why it is used here. For, while it is only just and right to admit the importance of the eleemosynary work of the Church, it is also in the interests of justice not to overstate it, or to imagine that it is any substitute for the deeper matters of the law.[13] It is because Church people have been content to point to their deeds of charity as proof that they are doing their duty by society that they have aroused feelings of contempt and scorn in those who have different ideas of what society really needs. To them, it seems as if well-to-do church people were living "off" of the inequalities and injustices of the modern social order, and then salving their consciences by making so many garments for the poor, or so many calls on the unfortunate, or attending so many charity organization meetings, or putting so many dollars on the contribution plate. Nothing can exceed the scorn with which the whole proceeding is referred to by the radical press. It speaks of the vast sums raised for "relief work" by the churches as "the anæsthetic with which the pious rich steadily chloroform their consciences." "Their real god is the almighty dollar, and they contribute a few of their idols to suborn the intellect and eloquence of divines and make even their otherwise generous hearts callous to the injustice which breaks the hearts and lives of the toilers that they may use their influence to discourage and discountenance all practical efforts of the sufferers to lift themselves out of the slough of despondency and despair."[14] And, after every allowance has been made for rhetorical exaggeration and biased bitterness, few candid Christians will be inclined to deny that there is ground for such feeling. Undeniably the Church has been too complacent about its alms and Dorcas societies.

Nevertheless, the question may well be asked where society would be without the instinct of compassion which is generated by the Church, the steady streams of benevo-

[13] See Chapter V, page 70.

[14] Bernard Shaw is more specific in his criticism: "The religious bodies . . . are a sort of auxiliary police, taking off the insurrectionary edge of poverty with coals and blankets, bread and treacle, and soothing and cheering the victims with hopes of immense and inexpensive happiness in another world when the process of working them to death in the service of the rich is complete in this." Preface to "Major Barbara," p. 190.

lence which flow from it, and the workers which are raised up by it, or, one may add, the organizations which have been the outgrowth of it. For there is not a philanthropy in the land which is not a visible incarnation of the spirit of Christ as witnessed in and through the Church. No one can imagine a modern community without a hospital. Yet, as Margaret Slattery has said, a hospital is as closely related to the Church as an apple is to a tree. Where there are no churches, there are no hospitals nor for that matter, are there institutions for the blind or defectives of any kind. All this vast work of social amelioration had its origins in the Church.[15] When one tells the story of it, one is recounting the outgrowth of what has been beautifully called "Christliche Liebesthätigkeit." Charles Loring Brace was fully justified in giving to his well-known book on social reform the title "Gesta Christi." And because the spirit of Christ has worked upon society through the Church, it might with equal truth have been called "Gesta Ecclesiae." For it is conceded that the funds for the maintenance of this work come largely from church people. The fact is that the Church cultivates the habit of giving. This is so true that objects such as the Red Cross and Anti-Tuberculosis work, and Near East Relief can appeal far more successfully to the people in the churches who are already bearing the whole cost of their churches and missionary work, than they can to those who are outside of the churches. It is of the churches that the promoters of such good works first think, to which they first appeal.

A recent editorial in "The New York Evening Post" makes this striking comment: "The Church is decadent, we are told, but the first thought of anyone who represents some pressing public need is to enlist the Church's strength.

[15] "No candid person dreams of denying that the record of the Church is stained and shamed by weaknesses, sins and crimes. None the less, it is true that the blessing one day to be universally diffused is first found flourishing within the Church. You may express it, if you like, in two phrases, both true, each capable of justification in a lifetime of historical research. First, the Church has been on the side of every evil which up to the present hour has been torn out of the life of civilization. Second, no evil has yet been torn out of the life of civilization except by the aid and inspiration of the Church. These statements are not contradictory each to the other. Each one is true of itself." Charles F. Aked, Christian World Pulpit, September, 1923.

'Why Smith Doesn't Attend Church,' is an inexhaustible theme for magazine symposia, but men who want to interest Smith in China or Poland do not rest until the churches call a Save China Sunday or Help Poland Sunday. Materialism is supposed to be corroding the fine self-abnegation of an earlier day, but after the church treasurers stand up and show that home missions, foreign missions, freedmen's aid societies, children's societies, temperance boards, Bible funds, and a dozen other activities survive and grow, there comes a long list of announcements like that of the $3,000,000 gift to China. The Christian denominations, with 42,000,000 members, are the greatest single group of organizations in America. Their membership includes in nearly all communities the most public-spirited and benevolent citizenship. Whatever the perils threatening church strength, the churches still play a notable role in altruistic endeavors."

The same things are true of social workers. Some years ago an effort was made to discover the relation of professional social workers to the Church.[16] Nearly one thousand men and women, devoting their lives to one form or another of social service, were asked if they had any relation to the Church, and what that relation was. Out of 878 replies received, no less than 753 reported themselves as communicants in some church. At least 90% of the whole number were related directly to it, either as attendants or members. The Church, that is, remains the source of that spiritual experience which finds its expression in the service of one's fellow-men.

It is generally agreed also that most institutions and agencies for social amelioration recruit their volunteer workers from Church adherents. Upon this point, Margaret Slattery has written some pertinent words: "Were some one with authority given the task of going from city to city across our country, stopping long enough to cross out from the list of officials and workers of charitable societies the names of everyone connected definitely through membership or worship with the Church, the list would present a sorry spectacle. I visited recently a large tuberculosis sanatorium and a home and a school for the blind, and in each case the people who made these vast charitable works possible were church people. I dropped into three meetings where relief for the unemployed was planned, only to find that the vast majority of those present were directly

[16] W. D. P. Bliss, The Outlook.

connected with the Church. I met in the anteroom a group of men who were running their business at a heavy loss to themselves that they might save from poverty the families of the men whom they employed. Every one was a church man. At the meeting of the hospital board, I met the women of the Church. At a Safety First conference, I still met men and women attached to the Church. At meetings in the interest of better laws for the protection of women and children, recreation centres and the use of school buildings for social centres, I found the people of the Church. In fact, if you ask who are bringing on their way the wayfarers and the lost, the soldiers along life's battle front waging their heroic warfare against disease, poverty, and misfortune, you find it in the great company of the Church, thinking, planning, giving,—without whom, they could not hope to win the fight."

No exclusive or extravagant statements need be made in order to show the worth of the Church to society from this point of view. There are many organized efforts for the re-forming of the social order which are entirely outside of all relation to the Church, at least some of which seem to go more directly to the heart of things than any effort that is now being made by the Church. There are thousands of devoted and self-sacrificing workers for social righteousness who are drawing their inspiration and generating their enthusiasm from sources that are remote from any altar. There are huge sums of money contributed by heroic givers for fraternal ends which never see the inside of a contribution plate. There are many persons of keenest social insight and sensitive social conscience who do not, because they feel they cannot, identify themselves with any organized Church. No attempt is made to question, much less to deny, all this. Within its own sphere, however, even if that sphere be called by some a narrow one, the Church is doing a work steadily, unweariedly, which is indispensable to social welfare.

Another form of service which the Church is rendering to society is often overlooked. It is overlooked because it is something which cannot be seen, and much less tabulated. Yet it is fundamental to human welfare, it monopolizes a large part of the time and strength of the pastors of churches, and constitutes one of the largest contributions which the Church is making to the peace and sanity of the social order. This work was called by

John Watson, "The Cure of Souls." It has been said that the supreme ministry of the Church is the ministry of reconciliation. Perhaps, the supreme worth of the Church is nowhere better evidenced than in its ministry to souls who need to be reconciled with themselves, their circumstances, or their fellow-men. It is a ministry which is more and more coming to the front in our day. The discovery of the close interrelation of mind and body; of the possibilities of the control of bodily conditions; and the effects of material circumstance by the exercise of mind and of the resources of the spirit; the overlapping of the work of physician and pastor;—all of the modern chapter of psychotherapy, in a word, has made the work of the cure of souls to be one of the foremost ministries of the Church to men today.

"The generation in which we live pays less and less attention to the diatribes of the pulpit; but it is also a generation which is more delicate than its predecessors, and looks for a Church which will help it back to spiritual health and will give individual attention to individual souls, recognizing the infinite variety of religious experiences, both healthy and diseased, of which the human soul is capable."[17] Thus the cure of souls is the greatest of all callings and it needs to be exercised with all the gifts that nature can bestow, all the knowledge of moral and mental problems that training can give, and the authority to pronounce absolution which the Church has the right and power to delegate. "The primitive Church, from the first, applied its teaching to spiritual failures. The Roman Catholic Church by sacraments, priesthood and confessional has always magnified this work of spiritual healing. But for many generations in Protestant Churches, the pulpit and the practice of philanthropy have largely obscured the care of the spiritually sick. The clergy have been too busy with sermons and 'meetings' to study the necessity of those whose souls are crying for help."

In our own day has come the awakening. To this task the Church is more and more adjusting itself. The confessional is no longer the exclusive possession of any Church.[18] The average parish minister of real sympathies is hearing confessions daily. He understands that there is that in human nature which finds relief in uttering to

[17] Kirsopp Lake, "The Stewardship of Faith," pp. 143, 144.

[18] See Charles Sheldon, "Protestant Confessional," January, 1922, Atlantic Monthly.

human ears that which has been kept between the soul and God; that the longing for the word of authority, the word of comfort and release from the lips of God's ministers is one which cannot be ignored and cannot be denied. More and more, he is taking infinite pains with individuals and finding his richest reward in this form of personal service. And the value of this side of the Church's ministry works out proportionately great to modern society. If the severest critic of the Church could see the delicate patient work done by inconspicuous parish ministers in helping to adjust personal relationships, to solve intimate personal problems, to redirect those who have lost their bearings, to encourage men to overcome habit and to face circumstances, all this contribution to social health and welfare would cause him to think more kindly of the Church.

Perhaps the ideal of this kind of ministry has been best defined for us by A. C. Benson in his Essay on Bishop Wilkinson: "He prayed and he blessed me, and sent me away happy and hopeful." "He did not encourage me to come again or to write to him and I felt that he had no sort of desire to establish a personal influence over me, but rather let me fight my own battles on simple and straightforward lines." "Though he carried in his heart the stained secret of hundreds of lives, he never used his power for personal ends, nor tried to establish a personal dominance. He had no desire to seek to retain a confidential hold over a single heart. He probably heard more confessions than any man in England,—but there never fell across him or his penitents the shadow of the confessional."[19] When one is seeking honestly to appraise the value to society of the Church, one must not leave out of the reckoning the value of this form of service.

The work of Missions constitutes such a unique record of service by the Church to our modern world that it is somewhat disconcerting to read a disparagement of it —at least in foreign lands,—in a recent and, in many respects, admirable discussion of the Church.[20] For to most unbiased observers today the work of Missions is a truly remarkable exhibition of spiritual vigour, the revelation of an extraordinary conscience and courage.

[19] A. C. Benson, "The Leaves of the Tree," 1911, pp. 154, 155, 163, 164.

[20] Durant Drake, op. cit., p. 36, pp. 153 ff.

Indeed, the greatest proof of the vitality of the Church is found in its program of missions. Even those who do not share in the belief that Christianity is for "every creature," have been impressed by the way that those who do, have literally addressed themselves to this seemingly impossible task, and are today prosecuting it on an immense scale. Neither have they failed to be impressed by the spectacle of hundreds and thousands of trained, cultured, intelligent men and women whom the Church has been able to secure, volunteers, willing to expatriate themselves and to live in non-Christian lands, under conditions which are always lonely, sometimes deadly and depressing, and occasionally, supremely tragic.[21]

First of all, the missionary work of the Church certainly disproves the charge that in no department of its life does it exhibit a spirit that can fairly be called heroic. The absence of a real heroism in conventional and contemporary Christianity is a defect which is felt more often than it is mentioned. The reasons why multitudes of men are not attracted by institutional Christianity is that it seems to offer scant scope for the morally adventurous spirit. Everywhere our Christian practice and our church life has to meet and to bear the silent, it may be, but the no less real, reproach of failing to exhibit and offer the elements of heroic and sacrificial life. But to that taunt either openly made, or tacitly implied, Missions and the Missionaries present a chapter of such heroic living and dying as to shame into silence those who say that the Church no longer produces heroes. The most inconspicuous but devoted missionary is doing the Church daily the service of proving the utter opposite.

Some time ago, a woman who was rather proud of saying that she "did not believe in foreign missions" came to know one of these humble missionaries. She described her experience as follows: "I may not believe in Foreign Missions, but I must believe in at least one foreign missionary. I have learned to know a quiet little woman, afraid, she says, to speak in public, who is planning this very winter, when I am to bring my daughter 'out,' to leave her little girls, just in their teens, whom she says she will not see until they are twenty, and she takes it all as a matter of course. That woman is living on a

[21] During the year 1921 alone, 1,619 young men and women from the United States and Canada sailed for service in foreign lands.

different planet from the one which I inhabit, and she says that she is only a Christian. I never knew before what it means to be a Christian."

As for the service of such men as Henry Martyn, of James Chalmers, of Horace Pitkin, or of such women as Mary Reed in India, or of Mary Eddy in Syria, or of Mary Morrill in China, it must be admitted that the world has never shown anything finer in the heights of heroism of which human character is capable. And, it is the Church which has produced them.

"When the great missionary societies, for example, want young men and young women of sound health, trained intelligence, social grace, and Christian integrity, to go forth to all the spiritual frontiers of earth and there display these qualities of 'courage, devotion, loyalty, willingness to die for one's cause' during all the working years of their consecrated lives, where do they get them? They get them, of course, from the churches where these young people have been converted, nurtured and furnished with that spiritual impulse which carries them into this chivalrous service. The missionary boards would never think of looking anywhere else for them. This sort of material is not produced anywhere else.

"The social settlement, with all its excellent qualities, if called upon for candidates to swelter on the Congo, or to shiver in Alaska or Labrador, or to face and relieve the dirt and the squalour, the disease and the vice of the crowded sections of the Orient, or to brave the attacks of Boxers in China, or the horrors of Armenian massacres, would be swift to say, 'It is not in me.' The labor union would speedily add, 'It is not in me.' This army of the choicest young people we know, enlisting for a warfare in which there is no discharge, going out to minister to people whose faces they have never seen, whose names they do not know, whose language they cannot as yet speak, but whose needs they have already made their own in warm, unselfish sympathy, comes forth steadily from those churches which have, according to the critics, become 'so feeble'—I quote again—'as to have no ethical enthusiasm for anything except negative ideals of individual behavior.'"[22]

[22] Charles R. Brown, "The Honor of the Church," pp. 6–9. "The splendid altruism of foreign missions has no rival in the mutual benefit funds of any [fraternal] organizations, and a genuinely evangelical church is less self-centered than a labor organization."

As for the work which these men and women are doing, only a biased mind, ignorant alike of its motives or its performance, can question its value. Most people today freely admit that the missionary enterprise has been and is a great instrumentality of human service. "It has scattered tens of thousands of men and women over many lands, teaching schools in city and country, in towns and villages. It has built hospitals by the thousand. It has sent its medical missionaries to deal every year with millions of sick and diseased peoples in Asia and Africa. It has been the one great, continuing, unselfish agency of unquestioning, loving, human service throughout the world, dealing not with emergency needs of famine and flood and pestilence alone, but year in and year out serving all human need and seeking to introduce into human society the creative and healing influence of Christ. 'Whatever you may be told to the contrary,' said Sir Bartle Frere, formerly Governor of Bombay, 'the teaching of Christianity among 160,000,000 of civilized, industrious Hindus and Mohammedans in India is effecting changes, moral, social and political, which for extent and rapidity of effect are far more extraordinary than anything that you or your fathers have witnessed in modern Europe.' "[23]

"There is hardly a country in the East where the name of some missionary is not revered in connection with the modern development of the nation. The name of Verbeck is readily acknowledged to be high in the list of the 'makers of the New Japan.' Alexander Duff and that splendid galaxy of Christian educators who have given their lives to India go far toward explaining all that is best in the Indian aspiration for a new national life. . . . 'In much of what is taking place (in India), the missionary can see the seed of Christian ideals beginning to spring forth from the soil. Nationality, liberty, enlightenment, the raising of the multitude—all these are not strange words in Christian ears. As for China, a former American consul-general at Peking has pointed out that the handful of Chinese leaders who precipitated the revolution and brought new political hopes to a quarter of the world's population, the new patriots who have been trying to recast imperial China into a republican mould, were practically all products of missionary teaching. Truly did Li Yuan Hung, ex-President of the Chinese Republic,

[23] "The Missionary Outlook in the Light of the War." Association Press, pp. xvi–xviii.

say, 'China would not be aroused today, as it is, were it not for the missionaries.' The names of Morrison, Williams, Martin, Allen, Richards, and others at once come to mind in vindication of this statement. The present political status of South Africa is explicable only in the light of what Moffat and Livingstone and Mackenzie have done in the Dark Continent. And these are but typical of a far greater number who, through their missionary service, have built up educational programs for a people, developed industrial life, been counselors to national leaders, or in other ways, contributed to the making of the new East."[24]

The churches of the United States and Canada are today prosecuting this task upon a truly colossal scale. According to the statistics of 1921 (the latest tabulation) their foreign mission boards[25] are supporting 16,574 missionaries, and 72,258 native workers. They operate 440 hospitals and 588 dispensaries, and no less than 717,343 children and youth are enrolled in schools and colleges. The income of these Boards for 1921 amounted to $38,671,158, and the total is being steadily advanced each year.

A similar service of deepest significance, not only for America but for the world, is being performed by our Home Mission Boards, in coping with spiritual destitution in our great cities among our alien population, and in country and backward districts in the East and all over the great commonwealths in the West. If it is true, as Lord Balfour remarked to Ambassador Page, that the whole world more and more will turn upon the great Republic as on a pivot, who can estimate the value of those forces which are being put in operation by the Church to counteract pagan influences, check tendencies to social dissolution, and to teach religion in the centres of our great cities and the waste places of our land? A vast host of home mission agencies are seeking in America to interpret the mind of Christ to all kinds and conditions of people and to transform all kinds of institutions into agencies for the increase of brotherhood, the promotion of goodwill and friendly service to meet every need of humanity so that America may be Christian.

The National Boards and Societies connected with twenty-eight denominations in the membership of the Home Missions Council and the Council of Women for

[24] "The Missionary Outlook in the Light of the War," pp. 6, 7.

[25] These figures are furnished by the Foreign Missions Conference of North America.

Home Missions reported the following statistics for the year 1922: Missionaries officially designated, 12,846; other persons known as Field Supervisors, teachers, doctors, nurses and others, 6,925; making a total of missionary personnel of 19,771. These Boards report a total endowment fund of $15,500,586.47 and a total income for the year from all sources of $23,354,625.85.[26]

Is it necessary to go into further detail in order to amplify the significance of this summary of the huge missionary enterprise of the Church? For one who wants to be fair it is necessary only to put to himself in all seriousness the question, "Can a Church be called decadent or moribund that is capable of undertaking a work of these dimensions, able to equip and to finance it, able to secure the men and women necessary to carry it on?" The splendid record of its missionary enterprises constitutes in the minds of most people the truest and justest vindication of the Church as the foremost agency in our modern world that is making for righteousness and the universal brotherhood of mankind.

In this chapter no mention has been made of the specifically spiritual message of the Church. The effort has been rather to survey briefly the position of the Church in human society today, and some of the contributions which it is making to human welfare. After all allowance is made for unintentional exaggeration of the value of these forms of service, or for failure to grasp their shortcomings, it does seem as if enough were left to put one "in good heart" about the Church and its possible, if not actual, ministry to our modern world.

[26] The scope of the work may be seen from a classification of the expenditures:

For the sustentation of the American churches	$4,283,005.51
For American Indians	772,802.90
For Missions to the Jews	89,951.00
For Work among Lumbermen and Harvesters	33,780.00
In Mormon areas	121,002.00
For Mountaineers	1,132,335.28
For Negro Americans	1,905,757.78
For Immigrants	608,750.37
For Orientals in America	217,135.73
For Mexicans in America	491,869.19
For Work in Alaska	247,140.25
For Latin America, including Cuba, Porto Rico, Haiti, Santo Domingo, and Border Work in Mexico and Central America	1,237,072.68

Chapter IV

WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH?

At this point it is necessary to face directly the difficult question: What is the primary purpose and mission of the Church? Is its mission fundamentally personal or social? Does it exist in the first instance to create a better social order or to create a better type of character? Is it to concern itself with spiritual problems of the personal life, or with the great social questions of the day? The proponents of the spiritual mission of the Church declare that if the social movement continues to monopolize the attention of the Church, worship will soon be displaced by work. The churches will become transformed into "social laboratories," sermons will become discussions of current events or tracts on socialism. These earnest Christians feel that the Church and all its auxiliaries should restrict themselves rigidly to "religious" functions. The purpose of the Church is to "preach the Gospel."

On the other hand, the Church that follows this plan comes in for stinging rebuke from another quarter. It is called both pharisaical and hypocritical. It is told that it is so immersed in its rites and its ceremonies that it is callous to conditions under which men and women are toiling and suffering and dying; that it is so concerned with the "Sweet by and bye" that it forgets the bitter here and now; it "dangles little spotless babies over a Christian font, but is dumb as an oyster to conditions that ruin children and youth faster than [the Church] can baptize them."[1] The Gospel that it preaches is said to be so hollow and insincere that it is a positive affront to men and women who are morally earnest.

What then is one to think? Where is the truth? Magazines bristle with articles on one side of the question or

[1] Charles H. Parkhurst, "Pulpit and Pew," p. 105.

the other.[2] And there seems to be reason on both sides. Nobody wants to go to a church where one hears nothing but economics and sociology. But neither does any one want to go to a church which makes a false division between the sacred and the secular and ignores the practical conditions of everyday life. Evidently, here is a subject which must carefully be thought through if one is to understand the mission of the Church in our modern world.

Probably the Church has not itself thought its way through to settled conclusions. Hence the uncertainty both in the ecclesiastical and in the popular mind. It is a problem which, felt from the beginning, has been rendered acute by the growth of the modern social movement. Primitive Christianity, still under the fresh impulse of Jesus,[3] was filled with social forces, but their implication was not wholly understood, and they operated, at first, within a very narrow sphere. None saw more clearly than the first Christian thinkers that an immediate and general application of the social principles of Jesus would precipitate a social revolution which would upset the early Christian communities as well as the Roman government. Hence, we find subordination to the existing order taught in the Early Church as a primary Christian duty.[4] The Early Church was largely absorbed in the construction of an adequate theology rather than primarily concerned with the reconstruction of the social order;[5] and, in a later age the revolutionary moral power inherent in Christianity was hindered from expressing itself by alien forces which fettered its influence. The ecclesiastical organization performed, as we have seen, a vast social service indirectly, but the church conscience itself was not concerned, apart from works of charity, with the external conditions of society.

[2] For two contrasted articles see "Social Service and the Churches" and "The Social Mission of the Church," Atlantic Monthly.

[3] See Harry F. Ward, "Year Book of the Church and Social Service in the United States," pp. 16 ff.

[4] Titus 3:1; I Pet. 2:17; Eph. 6:5.

[5] Upon the social influence of this theology, however, see A. V. G. Allen, "Christian Institutions," pp. 321, 408. "It is a truth whose confirmation is abundant in the history of the Church, that [even] those beliefs or institutions that seem . . . unworthy of the Christian spirit, have come into vogue in order to kill some deeper evils not otherwise to have been destroyed."

The Reformation, with its renewed emphasis on the sanctity of the personal life, laid the foundation of the modern social movement. But the Reformed churches themselves speedily became engrossed in distinctively theological issues, and their religious message was directed with increasing exclusiveness to the "soul." If Christianity had any message at all in regard to the physical conditions of men, the Church had apparently forgotten it. It is true that the Methodist revival in England and the Evangelical party in the Church of England in the early days of the nineteenth century originated the movement against slavery, for prison reform, for reform in poor relief, and for the repeal of the Corn Laws. In America, however, down to a very recent date, the Church had apparently taken scant interest in the social question. The Gospel which it preached was confined to the spiritual needs of individuals.

The assumption upon which, in a word, the mission of the Church thus conceived was based, was that the world itself is a lost and ruined world beyond hope of redemption. It is like the City of Destruction in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. It is marked for destruction by fire and brimstone. The world is not fit to be saved. All that can be done is to save men out of the world. And the Church was held to be the refuge of the men and women who escaped from the world before destruction overtook it. Or, if we may change the figure, the Church was conceived of as the Ark afloat in a world which had been overwhelmed, for its wickedness, with the flood. Its mission was to save as many poor drowning souls as possible, by receiving them into the Ark of Divine safety, from which they might look out in peace and contentment upon the universal ruin all about them. Religion, that is, was viewed exclusively as a personal matter between the soul and God. The mission and the only mission of the Church was to save men out of the world. The whole burden of preaching was "The voice of free grace cries, 'Escape to the mountain.'" To be a Christian was to be separate from the world. "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate,"[6] was the great text. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world,"[7] was the test of discipleship. To gather as many believers as possible out of a wrecked world was the great aim. So far

[6] 2 Cor. 6:17.
[7] 1 John 2:15.

as the present social order is concerned, the evangel held out no hope that it would ever be Christianized or even that it ought to be. The salvation, in a word, which the Church proclaimed, was personal and not social; it promised redemption to the souls of men, but held out no hope for a redeemed and regenerated world.

When the application of the Gospel to social questions began to be made, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, its exponents were assailed as dangerous heretics and agitators. Abuse was heaped upon Maurice and Kingsley and Robertson in England, and upon Henry Ward Beecher here in America. When Beecher began to preach against slavery, it was felt, to put it bluntly, that slavery was none of his business. He was a preacher of the Gospel, and what had preaching of the Gospel to do with political matters like slavery? In a Democratic procession in 1856, one of the marchers bore a transparency on which were the words: "Henry Ward Beecher had better stick to his pulpit."[8] That was the common idea in our churches for at least the first half of the nineteenth century. Not only were the great missionary societies silent on the subject of slavery, not only were the churches with rare exceptions equally silent, but this silence was eulogized and defended. Religion was regarded as a purely personal matter; its office was to make the relation between the individual and God right. The Christian religion was regarded as a means, not of making life in this world better and happier, but for preparing in this life for a better and a happier life hereafter. And because of this hard and fast distinction between the sacred and the secular, the soul and the environment, there were contradictions between piety and practice which today seem incredibly grotesque. In the diary of a New England clergyman intimate devotional reflections could be followed on the next page by a passage telling of the sale of his negro slave boy.[9]

[8] Henry Ward Beecher, by Lyman Abbott, p. 189.

[9] From an unpublished diary of Rev. Stephen Williams, minister of the Church at Longmeadow, Mass., from 1716–1782. On October 21, 1718, there is this entry: "I went to Swampfield and Deerfield. I sold my boy Nicholas. He seemed concerned that he was sold about, and surely I seemed grieved for him, but yet I thought it would be for his benefit to be sold to a master that would keep him to business as well as for my profit."

The Church in our day has reacted and revolted from this attitude.[10] Many causes have operated to bring this change about. Science has proved at this point to be the servant of religion. For the new science has taught us the sanctity of life in all its relations. It has broken down the old and false dualism between spirit and matter, between the individual soul and the physical universe. It teaches that all life is sacred; that life in all its forms is an essential unity; and that the purpose of God from the beginning has been the redemption, not of a part, but the whole of his world; not the salvation of men apart from the world, but the salvation of the world itself.

A fresh study of the Bible, from this angle, has revealed how deeply this truth is embedded in its teaching. It made clear that the Old Testament prophets foresaw the coming of One whose advent was to mean a renewed and restored social order. In the Messianic era, the lion and the lamb are to lie down together; the cow and the bear are to feed side by side; the child will play on the hole of the asp;[11] in a word, there will be harmony, order and peace in the whole created world. The teaching of Jesus was found to be in entire agreement with this idea. The Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven in its light could no longer be interpreted exclusively in terms of a future world; it contained also the prophecy of an ideal society on earth.[12]

This interpretation that applied the Kingdom to this world proved to be one of the most revolutionary of all the ideas that came into vogue during the nineteenth century. In its light, history was rewritten, the Bible was restudied, theology was reconstructed, the Church was reorganized. A new dignity, a new comprehensiveness, a new and glorious mission was thus conferred upon the Christian Church. Its purpose henceforth was not to save men out of a lost world, but to save the world itself in all its manifold relations. The world itself, to quote the title of Canon Fremantle's epoch-making book, was the

[10] That conscience has still further to go in freeing the Christian from implication in the injustices of the present social order is freely admitted, and is discussed in the next chapter.

[11] Isa. 7: 14, 11: 6–8.

[12] For a concise and authoritative discussion of this subject, see George Holley Gilbert, art. Kingdom of God (Heaven), Hastings' Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels.

"Subject of Redemption." A whole new Christian literature sprang into being which made it the mission of Christ, not only to make men worthy to be called the children of God, but also to make a state of society on earth worthy to be called the Kingdom of God. His object is not to save some, few or many, from a wrecked or lost world, but to recover the world itself and make it righteous. The function of the Church is re-construed in turn and it becomes the instrument used by the Christian faith for the regeneration of the world. It ceases to be an end, it became a means to an end; not a refuge for the saved, but a recruiting-station for those who are willing to try to be saviours. Its services of worship are regarded not only as means of grace by which one may resist, but also may hope to overcome, the evil in the world. And the evil of the world, itself, is viewed not so much as a sign of its perdition as a battle challenge to the faith and energy of the disciples of Christ; and the object which the Church steadily holds before itself, in good days and in evil days, is none other than that of Christ, Himself, the saving of the whole world to the knowledge and to the love of God.

Such is the revolution, for it is nothing less, which has taken place in the conception of the mission of the Church in our modern world. Characterized in a phrase, it has been "the socialization of religion." Its significance is past measuring, either for the Church or for society. It has meant an immense enlargement of the message and mission of the Church. Preaching has been given new scope and meaning. The old preaching concentrated itself upon the personal experience of the individual and grew to be introspective and morbid. It became absorbed in all kinds of minute questions of personal spiritual psychology; the difference between regeneration and sanctification; the signs of each; true and spurious conviction of sin; the relation of repentance to conversion; the possibilities of personal holiness; whether or not one should be willing to be damned for the glory of God.

Running over the list today, one feels that the real trouble here is that the Gospel lacks elbow room; that these questions so put did not furnish scope enough for the Gospel to express itself with any fullness. As a consequence, it took on all these strange, cramped forms. There should be a glory in the new preaching that was not open to the old. For while it goes to the same source, the spiritual message which it finds there leads to larger

ends. It tells a man that his chief duty may be to know God and to enjoy Him forever, but that to know God means something more than to sit down absorbed in the contemplation of His love; it means rising up early and late to find his enjoyment in sharing in the work and will of God to make this world His own. It tells him in the words of John Wesley, that there is no such thing as a solitary Christian . . .; that we cannot be saved alone; that the real sign of salvation is not to be found in correctness of opinion, or in intensity of feeling; but in the simple dedication of one's will to God. "How can you call that man good?" the Italian patriot Mazzini once asked, "Whom has he saved?"

In the same spirit, modern preaching warns men and women that the real proof that they are Christians lies in their willingness, like Christ, to be the saviours of men. A new sphere is offered to them for their own regenerated life to operate in, and that sphere is none other than the whole social order of which the individual, himself, is a part.

It must not be imagined, however, that the socialization of religion is complete, or that it has been accompanied by no loss. Without doubt, the modern emphasis upon the humanitarian mission of the Church has resulted, in a partial eclipse at least, of its spiritual message. The Church can never in this one-sided way overlook its unique mission as alike, the shrine and the herald of spiritual realities, without corresponding loss of dignity, prestige and authority among men. "For many years now, we have witnessed great efforts to make the ethical or the humanitarian passion do the work of the passion for God. . . . We have been expected to let the passion of Hebrew and Christian souls for God give place to the passion for truth, for goodness, for justice, for brotherhood, for humanity. We have seen in recent years increasing signs of a too terrestrial religion—a growing secularity—a strong tendency and disposition, even where the creed is most orthodox and evangelical, to make more of earth than of heaven, more of man than of God, more of work than of worship, more of Church halls with their enlarged provisions for secular activities than of Church altars; more of social gratification than of those sacrifices of God which are broken and contrite hearts; more of speeches and addresses on social and semi-political sub-

jects than of sermons which deal directly with God and the soul with 'All that once was great in Christendom, when God meant God.' The result of it all has been a kind of spiritual sterility and exhaustion, and the sadness and the folly of it will soon be apparent. The ethical movement, as a distinct movement, is well-nigh already a spent force. Many of those who were attracted by it for a time, are discovering that the passion for God alone will ultimately satisfy the soul and is inclusive of moral perfection and the realization of the moral ideal."[13]

Earnest voices today are summoning the Church to return to its supreme task of creating an adequate sense of God as the backbone of religion. We cannot, it is now perceived, develop or even appeal surely and healthfully to the religious side of human nature except by showing how truly all mankind may find satisfaction in God. To attempt to satisfy the deepest longings of our nature by a plan of reform or a social panacea, or even a philosophy of religion is to give men a stone when they have asked for bread. And it is the true bread for which men seem to be asking today.

Thoughtful observers agree that a pronounced leaning toward the intimate sources of spiritual life is evident upon the part of the rank and file of men and women in our modern world. "All over this country are thousands of thoughtful lives, trained in modern ways of thinking, out of the reach of ecclesiasticism or of orthodoxy, yet with this great thirst upon their souls, as eager for some assurance of a living God as the hart for the water brooks.[14] . . . They do not seek a complicated or elaborate system of theology, but they thirst for faith that will speak the word of peace to their troubled souls." Witness, for example, the extraordinary sale and circulation in our day of such books as those of Mr. Dresser and of Mr. Trine, books which are not serious literature or serious philosophy. Yet, they are sold by the hundreds and thousands because of the hundreds and thousands who want, by some means or other, to get "in tune with the Infinite."

People are beginning to have desperate misgivings about the power of material things to satisfy the human soul permanently. They are having their misgivings about the ability of science to answer the questions alone on which

[13] Robert Hunter, "The Christian Commonwealth."

[14] "The Thirst for the Living God," a Sermon by Francis Greenwood Peabody.

a man's health and happiness and holiness depend. They have begun to realize that science has made a world for us which is a nightmare if it has no God anywhere in it. People are finding it more easy to believe in the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob again than to picture themselves clinging to the thin outside crust of a planet that is spinning through abysmal distances, without an Eye to look on, or an Ear to hear, or a Heart to care.

Furthermore, the modern man has begun to be troubled again by the fact of sin. As a writer in Collier's Weekly puts it: "People are having their misgivings as to what a popular philosophy is saying on the subject of sin: that if a man sins today it is largely a matter of temperament. He sins because his grandfather was a sinner, or he sins because he lives on the wrong street corner. Now, that ought to comfort a man, but somehow it does not; and it ought to take the ache out of his heart, but, instead, it leaves it there. It leaves him with the blight of sin on his soul and it leaves him with a heart that is ashamed. So that men are beginning to turn back to the old Book because it does not say any cheap and easy words about it at all when it talks about sin, but tells a man before it gets though talking about sin that there is a God with Whom there is forgiveness, Who speaks to him the words, 'Go and sin no more.'"

Then there are desperately tired people in this world who look at their business and do not find rest there; and when they look at the stars, they do not find rest there; and when they look into their newspaper, there is nothing restful there. They are beginning to long for a peace which is not of this world. They are saying: "What richer consolation are we standing out for that we turn from Judea? Has the human heart so changed under the wear and tear of the centuries that sin no longer has need of forgiveness and grief has no need of a comforter? Has our science banished failure and depression from a man's life? Is man's heart, at last, all-sufficient and all-sufficing?"

In a word, it is the reality of a personal religious experience which will sustain them when put to the test that men are seeking. They want a faith able to cure their maladies of both soul and body; that will supply a real uplift and re-enforcement to what they know to be their present, inadequate spiritual resources. People have discovered that the cares of this world are so many, its

problems so heavy, and its perplexities strike so deep, that they can be saved only by a great tide of spiritual vitality; and they have made the discovery that, if that tide is obtainable from any source at all, it must come from the heart of God. Great hosts are calling for a spiritual Church that shall stand in our modern world, as a witness for the things wherein all men are one, a witness for all the things whereby all men live.

For the Church, when confronted by an undoubted spiritual opportunity like this, to allow its spiritual message and mission to become obscured, is somehow to lose its birthright. A realization of this on the part of thinkers most vitally interested in the social movement has caused them, also, to deprecate what seems to be the present tendency to secularize the sources of spiritual power.

"Something in most of us feels the same distaste for social Christianity. And no wonder. Cant about social service fills the air. Our complacent youths make it an excuse for the neglect of penitence and devotion. The hungry sheep leave Church, swollen, less often with theological wind than in Milton's day; but with sociological chaff, which is no more nourishing. Earnest people go to Church very wistful, and what they crave from Christian preaching, they do not receive. They want release for the frozen will; power imparted to open the soul to the inflowing grace of God. Too often the modern pulpit fails to meet their need. Too often the modern Church seems only a great machine for the cheery promotion of social welfare. . . . [The Church's] business is with life on the higher level, the life regenerate. On this level she must teach, from this level she must appeal. Her primary duty . . . is to keep the channel open between the temporal and the eternal; through sacraments, through the Word of God, through all those disciplines of the interior life sanctified by the experience of questing generations. . . . To ignore this secret sacred work, to throw it into the background while impatient stress is put wholly on Church responsibility for solving social problems, would be to join the forces of anti-Christ. The enduring task and glory of the Church is to foster in man the consciousness of God and to help him to union with his Maker."[15]

The late Charles Cuthbert Hall, a man vitally interested in every aspect of the social question, had the same

[15] Vida D. Scudder, "The Church and the Hour," pp. 27, 28, 37, 65–67. By permission. Copyright, E. P. Dutton & Co.

misgivings: "I appreciate with all my heart the pressing calls to social service, the earnest exhortations to social endeavour, the manly and insistent efforts which the Church is putting forth to right social wrong, to concern itself with their material needs. Yet in all this there lies the danger that in our practical ministry we shall lose sight of the true source of social power: mystic communion with God. There must be a perennial fountain before there can be a stream. And what we need to make sure of is that the inner and spiritual side of Christianity is not being undervalued in comparison with its outer side. The exclusive call to social service is a deadening rather than a quickening call: it cuts us off from those sources of power which can both supply the needed dynamic and can spiritualize the aid we offer."[16]

In its reaction against a purely individualistic Gospel, the Church today has swung to the opposite extreme and seeks, all too often, to substitute "social service" for the things of the Spirit. "There are many wrongs to right, for the most part centering in the body; but, in spite of my sympathy with each distinct measure, and my strenuous efforts to help forward some of them, I feel a great sense of lack. The horizon is near and attainable. The sky comes down like a brass bowl over our heads. I stifle in this world of nostrums, of remedies, of external cures for moral evils. This superficial, material optimism which ignores the deepest need, the deepest answer, fails to suffice. One is aware of a lessening life, a drying of the very sources of vitality. The old sense of illimitable destiny, of greatness, of the challenge of eternity, is gone."[17]

In some way, it is plain, these two aspects of the Church's mission must be united and fused into a living, throbbing whole if the Church is to assume its true position and perform its full ministry in our modern world. If the question be asked how can this be done, it may be well to answer by asking, how was it done? For nothing is clearer to one who knows his New Testament than the absence of any clash or contradiction between these two aspects of the total message of Jesus. There is certainly none to be found in the pages of the four

[16] See Charles Cuthbert Hall, "Universal Elements in the Christian Religion," pp. 140, 141, 162, 163, 172, 179.

[17] "Whither," Atlantic Monthly.

Gospels. We see Jesus ministering to the needs of men—but He does not mend their bodies to the neglect of their souls; nor does He minister to their spiritual needs and ignore their physical condition. To the man sick of the palsy, He said: "Take up thy bed and walk," but He also said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee."[18] One cannot imagine Him leaving either unsaid. To have forgiven his sins and left him palsied was as impossible for Jesus as to have made him able to walk but left him a sinner. The two went together: together they represent the twofold but single ministry of Christ to men. Sometimes, He seems to be preoccupied with the external needs of man. At other times, He apparently deals with their spiritual destitution. In reality, He is never concerned with the one to the exclusion of the other. He pities the multitude because they have nothing to eat, but the food He feeds them with is also a symbol of the Bread of Life. He cast out the evil spirits which were tormenting men's bodies but, at the same moment, he freed them from the spirits of evil that fettered their souls. So intimate is the union of this ministry to soul and body that the one cannot be treated apart from the other.

If this is true of the ministry of Jesus, it is equally true of the ministry of His apostles. In the book of the Acts and in the Epistles, we read much of the social effects of the early preaching; but it is always with the preaching that the social effects of Christianity are bound up. The lame man at the Temple leaps up but the source of his cure is "in the name of Jesus."[19] Men and women, poles apart in external conditions, unite in a true spiritual democracy—but what makes them one is the fact that they "are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."[20] In vain will any one try to separate the ethics of St. Paul from his theology. The twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans has an intimate relationship with the context which immediately precedes it. The life which St. Paul preaches, were it lived, would mean the solving of every social problem. But it cannot be lived save on the terms of his preachment. Precisely as the practice of the Sermon on the Mount involves the personal appropriation of the spiritual message of Jesus, the moral

[18] St. Matt. 9:5.
[19] Acts 3:6.
[20] Gal. 3:26, 28.

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living of the New Testament presupposes its underlying theology.

In the long run, it will be found that there is but one way of avoiding "the menacing division between spiritual and social Christianity."[21] If social religion is to be delivered from the reproach of unspirituality, so often and so justly visited upon it, its roots must reach down to a faith that is profoundly spiritual. The effort to divorce social enthusiasm from the sources of Christian inspiration is perhaps the most serious attempt which the modern mind has made to put asunder what God hath joined together. It is only, in short, as the humanitarian work of the Church accompanies its spiritual teaching that the distinctively spiritual appeal will be freed from unreality and insincerity; and it is only as the spiritual message of the Church is authoritative and commanding, that its humanitarian work ceases to be temporary and superficial. The modern worker for righteousness is fully convinced of the former; but, too often, he overlooks the equal truth of the latter. He is keen to have the Church identify itself with all the social movements of our time, as indeed it should, but he does not so easily admit the equal necessity that he himself shall submit to the purifying and anointing influence of the Spirit of Christ, which it is the mission of the Church as the High Priest of society to bestow.

The real worth of social service which has its roots in a religion that is truly spiritual was described years ago by one who well illustrated in his own character and work what he sought to describe: "Everywhere we are beset with the plea that we take the external conditions of life in charge. It is implied that the word of pardon is but an appealing incident of life and that only an effective command, 'Arise and walk,' is the true test of the reality of God....The act of power has its place; and we shall not refuse it any more than He refused it. But we shall see, as He first saw, that there are deeper wants than health and bread. We shall do all, and by every means, to be the instruments of mercy in its every sense, and to serve to the full measure of our time and strength in every legitimate interest of sane and wholesome and happy life. . . . But . . . into the world of thirst and need we shall give not cups of cold water only, but cups of cold water in the name of Christ. . . . We shall go forth into

[21] By permission from Vida D. Scudder, ibid., pp. 65–67. Copyright, E. P. Dutton & Co.

a world which is full of that want, which finds its sin and damage and wretchedness not in lack alone, but in loveless bitterness, in suspicion, in hardmindedness, in petty jealousies of thrift, and then we shall speak first of all the Gospel of that Father who so loved us that he gave His Son for us. We shall speak the word which sweetens and humanizes, which cheers and heartens, which touches the soul beneath in mourning and the manhood in the man; which by the appeal to sonship in the heart shall not only sanctify the gift but dignify the man both to the world and to himself. For the Christianizing of aid is the only rescue of manhood. The social helpfulness of the Church must lie, at last, in the commanding and divine efficiency with which she loves."[22]

In a word, "the socialization of religion is not a substitute for personal religion; it is the expansion of personal religion. The relation of the individual to God remains the central fact of the religious life, but the circle in which the religious life is to operate becomes enormously enlarged. The centre remains the same, but the circumference extends with the development of the social conscience; and the individual, instead of finding himself an isolated atom in a closed world, becomes himself a factor in a social movement."[23]

If the old evangel lacked a social goal to the Christian effort, there is danger that the new evangel will lack that central inspiration by which alone that goal can be attained. Thus, whoever truly wants to be socially useful will pause before he cuts oneself off from organic union with the source of spiritual power. Social service can never be a substitute for the religious life nor an annex to it. "For their sakes," said Jesus, "I sanctify myself."[24] To sanctify oneself for others' sake is the perfect expression of the religious life. It is neither piety without humanity nor humanity without piety. It is that truest piety which expresses itself in the broadest and most lasting humanity. For the truest humanitarian passion always seeks the sources of its inspiration in the deepest piety.

In the history of religion, the mystics have always been

[22] Edgar Gardner Murphy, The Outlook.

[23] Francis Greenwood Peabody, "The Socialization of Religion," Vol. VII, 1912. Publication of American Sociological Society.

[24] St. John 17:19.

the real reformers, for they have touched life not on its circumference but at its centre. And today, it will be found that our real problem is neither economic nor industrial in nature. In the last analysis it is a spiritual problem. "This human society of ours will never become sound and sweet except by the moralization, except by the spiritualization of its members. By all means let the outward reform be carried on with zeal and with courage, but it must be accompanied by that inward reform which makes conscience a light to a man's feet and fills him with the spirit of Jesus Christ who imposes few laws from above but sheds warmth and light from within. A right spirit is a thousand times more searching, exacting, and effective than the most rigid regulation."[25] "The great asset of our civilization, incomparably more important than all our astonishing apparatus for promoting physical comfort, is the mind of Christ. That mind penetrated all the perplexities of human relations and solved the problem of life in all its phases. It is on the spirit of Christ working through individuals and shaping and inspiring our politics that we must depend to straighten out the tangles in our affairs. That is the only force which is equal to so huge a task: . . . which can make labour duly tolerant of capital, and capital truly considerate of labour; that can keep the spiritual in control of the material, and yet bring liberty and opportunity to all creatures to work out all that there is in them of good."[26]

Thus, the mission of the Church is to equip the individual soul with inspirations which alone are adequate, not only for personal contentment and victory, but for the true prosecution of its social task. That the Church, all through its history, has done this essential work for multitudes of the choicest souls the world has ever seen, who can doubt? That unnumbered souls are being fed, day by day, at her altars with the Bread of Life, which enables them to live lives of sheer holiness and so of deepest social helpfulness, who can question? These saints of the fireside and of the market-place wear no sandals or girdle, but are none the less the salt of the earth, and, by the invigourating and penetrating quality of their lives, they are literally keeping our social order sane and whole-

[25] Lyman Abbott, The Outlook.
[26] E. S. Martin, "The Unrest of Women," pp. 142, 143.

some and preventing its rottenness and decay. Thus, one perceives how the deepest claim of the Church to the loyalty of men today lies in no parade of statistics or performance and why it prevails in spite also of its seeming defects and shortcomings. For, once understand the social worth and the social necessity of the Christian inspiration, and the appeal of the Church is lifted above exclusively personal and subjective consideration, and is given a far more imposing scope and meaning.

Chapter V

THE CHURCH AND THE SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

The progress of our discussion has made it clear that the Church can fail to perform its mission to our modern world in either of two ways: by failing to strike the spiritual note clearly and strongly, or by failing to define religion and to express the religious life so as to include every legitimate human interest.

No doubt, to speak of the latter point first, many earnest people feel that the Church is provincial and parochial in its thought and in its outlook. To them, its horizon seems narrow and its interests seem centred largely in its own ecclesiastical machinery. It often appears strangely unaware, they say, of the most significant social movements of our time. Neither its teaching nor its method seems to them to show much of the great modern passion for social justice. The chances are that these have not followed the currents of Church thought and feeling closely enough to be familiar with the profound change which has overtaken the attitude of Church leaders and Church councils toward what is known as the social question. Even so, this change of front has been neither so rapid nor so thorough as to change the feeling of the radical that the Church is, and is likely to remain, the bulwark of capitalism and the stronghold of the conservative financial interests. The churches, he insists, have had no part in whatever social emancipation has thus far been won; that emancipation has been won not only without the churches, but in spite of them.

There is evidence sufficient, however, to persuade one, who is not an unreasonably determined partisan in the present economic conflict, that there has been, upon the part of Church leaders, at least, a resolute attempt to face the social implications of the Gospel.[1] As long ago

[1] See Harry F. Ward, "A Year Book of the Church and Social Service in the United States," 1916, Chapter VI, "The Voice of the Churches."

as 1908, for example, the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church adopted the following statement for its "Social Creed":

"The Methodist Episcopal Church stands:

For equal rights and complete justice for all men in all stations of life; for the principle of conciliation and arbitration in industrial dissensions; for the protection of the worker from dangerous machinery, occupational disease, injuries and mortality; for the abolition of child labor; for such regulation of the conditions of labor for women as shall safeguard the physical and moral health of the community; for the suppression of the 'sweating system'; for the gradual and reasonable reduction of the hours of labor to the lowest practical point, with work for all; and for that degree of leisure for all which is the condition of the highest human life; for a release from employment one day in seven; for a living wage in every industry; for the highest wage that each industry can afford, and for the most equitable division of the products of industry that can ultimately be devised; for the recognition of the Golden Rule and the mind of Christ as the supreme law of society and the sure remedy for all social ills."

The Presbyterians of Canada, as far back as 1911, passed the following resolutions:

"Believing that it is the duty of the church to show that Christian principles apply to human affairs, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada declares its belief in a program:—For the acknowledgment of the obligations of wealth; for the application of Christian principles to industrial associations; for a more equitable distribution of wealth; for the abolition of poverty; for the protection of childhood; for the safeguarding of the working people from dangerous machinery; for compensation for industrial accidents; for the regulation of working conditions in other ways; for one day's rest in seven; for conciliation and arbitration in industrial disputes; for proper housing; for proper care of dependents and criminals and the prevention of crime and vice; for pure food and drugs; for wholesome recreation; and for international peace."

In December, 1912, the Federal Council of the Churches adopted this "Social Creed of the Churches":

"The Churches must stand for: The protection of the family, by the single standard of purity, uniform divorce laws, proper regulation of marriage, and proper housing; the fullest possible development for every child, especially by the provision of proper education and recreation; the abolition of child labor; such regulation of the conditions of toil for women as

shall safeguard the physical and moral health of the community; the abatement and prevention of poverty; the protection of the individual and society from the social, economic, and moral waste of the liquor traffic; the conservation of health; the protection of the worker from dangerous machinery, occupational diseases, and mortality; the right of all men to the opportunity for self-maintenance, for safeguarding this right against encroachments of every kind, and for the protection of workers from the hardships of enforced unemployment; suitable provision for the old age of the workers, and for those incapacitated by injury; the right of employees and employers alike to organize, and for adequate means of conciliation and arbitration in industrial disputes; a release from employment one day in seven; the gradual and reasonable reduction of the hours of labor to the lowest practicable point, and for that degree of leisure for all which is a condition of the highest human life; a living wage as a minimum in every industry, and for the highest wage that each industry can afford; a new emphasis on the application of Christian principles to the acquisition and use of property, and for the most equitable division of the product of industry that can ultimately be devised."

Even more drastic and passionate is the note sounded by the Commission on Social Service of the American Christian Convention:

"In the civilization of today, whenever food and things needful to the body are lacking, the kingdom of God in the lives of humanity is retarded.

Query. When the great merchant princes of our time become millionaires, while a pitifully small wage is paid to the girls that work in their emporiums, do you think religion should have anything to say to the princes of finance?

Query. When the prices of the necessities of life become too high through juggling of the markets, so that little children in our slums, and in our manufacturing centres, are insufficiently nourished and clothed, and for the rest of their lives their bodies are stunted, do you think that religion should have anything to say for children?

Query. When women are driven through the necessities of economic conditions and their husbands' greed to leave their homes and their children, and give the best hours of the day to work in factories, should anything be said to lighten their burden and restore the call of motherhood to supreme importance?

Query. When public school education is centred more and more in our cities, and multitudinous social activities make the lives of city dwellers interesting and neighborly, what should our country churches do to make the lives of the folks more

pleasant and neighborly who dwell in the remote rural places of our lands? Does religion have anything to offer that will help our young country boys and girls in outlying districts to have a life with enough of good, healthful fun and pleasure in it, or are these things too worldly?

Query. If economic conditions and degenerate children, born of diseased parents, make possible and probable the brothels of Christian America, should the Church cure the disease, or should it treat only the symptoms, after the disease has spread through the body politic?"

In the light of these different pronouncements, which might be indefinitely multiplied, it is no longer fair to say that the churches are either ignorant or dumb on the great social questions of the day.

If further proof is desired of the social outlook and attitude of the modern Church, it may be found in the Interchurch World Movement Report on the Steel Strike of 1919, and in the resolute reply of the Ministerial Union of the Presbyterian churches of Pittsburgh to the proposal of the Pittsburgh Employers' Association that a financial boycott be declared against the Young Women's Christian Association and the Federal Council of the Churches because of their industrial program.

If, however, these declarations of Church assemblies and occasional manifestations of social courage are left out of the account, and an impartial effort is made to assess the social conscience and attitude of the average church, it cannot be denied that these leave much to be desired from the standpoint of modern social idealism. It may be urged with justice not that the Church has no social conscience, but that its social conscience is too often conventional in its range; that it lacks a penetrating moral vision and an uncompromising moral courage. President Wilson once remarked that the Church should create a revolution in a man's thinking and living. The defect in its moral outlook lies in the fact that it is content too often to provide no more than a religious foundation for the existing social or economic order. Its Gospel has not within it the saving leaven of discontent that will force a new and a higher and a juster social order to emerge from the present inequitable system.

Some one has spoken of "the disturbing idealism" of Jesus. Any one who reads the New Testament with that phrase in mind will discover for himself that the idealism of Jesus was, indeed, disturbing. "When Herod, the

king heard it,"[2] we read, "he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him." It upset the Scribes, Pharisees and all other ecclesiastical and social partisans of the day. They saw mischief in it. It had disquieting potentialities in it. That disturbing element was the root reason of their desire to rid themselves of Jesus. In the later New Testament, we find the idealism of Jesus creating a revolution in the thinking and living of lay Christians. They did not conform themselves to the existing status, they transformed it. Their social conscience was creative and actually wrought out a new social order higher than the world had hitherto known.

And the sign that the Church today truly embodied the idealism of Jesus, would be something unsettling in its message. There was social disturbance at Ephesus because of the message of St. Paul. The business men of Ephesus were indignant. "Sirs," they said, "ye know that by this craft we have our wealth?"[3] The real Gospel does not let things alone. And if it be true that the Church today simply provides a religious foundation for the existing social order, then whatever else the Church is doing or is not doing, it is not apprehending, proclaiming and living the disturbing idealism of Jesus. For if the Church has a mission, distinct from all other institutions and agencies that exist, surely its mission is this: to make the Spirit of Jesus its contribution to the ideals which are provocative of discontent. "My religion," a great pagan has written, "is to think the unthinkable thought, to speak the ineffable word, to do the impossible deed, and to walk the impossible way." If a pagan can say that, how much more should a Christian be able to say it? Was not that in essence the religion of Jesus? But is not the contemporary ecclesiastical conscience too often content to think what has been thought, to echo the word that has been spoken, to do the possible deed, and to walk in a path that has been well trodden already? Can it be claimed that its thought is critical and constructive; that its outlook overleaps the existing status and is passionately bent on the creation of juster and truer conditions; that its conscience is keen, awake to defects in actual conditions and resolutely bent on securing a closer approximation to the Kingdom of God?

[2] St. Matthew 2:3.
[3] Acts 19:25.

From this point of view, the undoubted devotion of the Church to all forms of charity and relief does not begin to meet the issue. Salvaging work even on the largest scale can no longer satisfy its social conscience. Today, when multitudes are demanding a social organization based on social justice, when economic students are insisting that poverty is preventable and that many of society's ills can be permanently cured, the Church cannot rest content with antiquated methods and palliative measures and have men remain loyal to it. Efforts to relieve distress must be supplemented by even more determined efforts to cure it. Already the Church has incurred the suspicion of being more interested in charity than in justice, and to that extent, its charity is resented. As a result, the toiler feels, often unjustly, that its services of social amelioration are a pretense and a sham. It is plainer every day that our Church conscience must go far beyond the notion of charity and must swiftly realize that while its business is to care for the poor, its first business is to remove the causes of poverty. Otherwise, our Church conscience will not be in line with the social conscience of our time.

The criticism may fairly be made that thus far the Church's social work has devoted more attention to effects than to causes; more to personal action than to the use of social forces. It is quick and tender in its care for victims of tuberculosis, yet not in condemning the real estate that produces them; it is lavish in gifts to provide hospitals for the victims of industrial accidents and disease, but not in its indignation against the industrial greed and carelessness responsible for them; it gives bountifully to the hungry and naked, but it tolerates an industrial order that breeds them. In a word, the traditionally Christian moral code needs expansion and revision to square it with the changed requirements due to the passing of the center of interest in the modern world from individual to social problems.[4] An individualistic religion is no longer adequate to our needs today. We need less glorying in charitable institutions while the causes of destitution are left untouched. Poverty and other evils must be attacked at their source and not in their effects.

The Church has always done pretty nearly what it con-

[4] See "The Stewardship of Faith," Kirsopp Lake, p. 3.

ceived to be its duty in each age. The trouble today lies in its understanding of its duty. The supreme duty of the Church today is to direct onslaughts not only upon personal and individual, but also upon social and collective forms of sin. The Church has no attraction for multitudes of men and women because they cannot discover, even amongst Church people, who most earnestly desire better things, any resolve to secure equality of opportunity for all men and all women, or any sort of a demand that poverty be swept away and equal conditions of life and service be established. Until the Church shows its moral determination that corporate, as well as individual, selfishness shall be checked by justice, and that the economic world shall not proceed solely on the basis of self-interest, it will not exhibit the type of social conscience that will command the loyalty of thinking and suffering humanity. For the Church is the agent of the Kingdom of God only in proportion as it keeps itself the true instrument and shrine of that pervading and all-conquering spirit of Christ, which it cannot deny or lose, without losing its birthright and its glory.

At this point we are confronted by the serious situation that many people today are looking for this inclusive, courageous and penetrating moral conscience, beyond the Church and not to it. It is not to the point to ask whether they really need to go so far. It is sufficient for our purpose to note that this is what many earnest souls are actually doing. The fact must be faced by everyone who thinks seriously about the Church that "Society has absorbed into its living tissue a large measure of that idealism of which the Church seemed once to be the solitary representative. . . . Society in the 20th century differs from that of the 13th century, for example, in having moral resources within itself which render it independent of any single section in the pursuit of the highest good."[5]

It has well been asked if the predicament in which organized Christianity is placed at the present day does not arise from the confiscation of its highest idea in conception and practice by the morality outside and independent of the Church.[6] This is more than a matter of mere academic interest. It is a question of life and

[5] Hibbert Journal, "The Church and the World."
[6] "Moral Order and Progress"—Alexander Monroe, p. 413.

death for both the Church and the new social order. No man who faces it honestly can treat it flippantly. He will not view it with myopic optimism, nor will he condemn the Church as outworn and moribund. But he will freely admit that the Church cannot maintain its moral leadership if the social conscience it displays is not alive enough, penetrating enough, to satisfy such numbers of those who represent that which is best in modern culture and social passion, so much that is earnest in every class of society. Many of those who have silently withdrawn from the Church or have lost faith in it are not the frivolous or the unmoral, but men and women who believe that they can realize Christ's ideas better outside the Church than through its instrumentality. A significant body of earnest people among us have experienced a genuine quickening of faith and a renewal of interest in religion on the one hand and a diminution of Church interest and loyalty on the other. It is not a spectacle that can be observed without concern. For a convincing demonstration of the possession by the Church of an adequate social conscience would attach such men to it with enthusiastic and permanent loyalty.

If this is true of a large body of earnest social observers, it is also true of a large body of industrial workers. Of course, one would need to be hopelessly blinded by conceit in order to hold that their own interests are flawlessly unselfish or that their ideals are altogether impersonal. On the other hand, only church people who are blind to the facts will believe that the hostility to the Church of so many industrial workers is due solely to envy and covetousness. The fact needs to be faced that there is an enormous amount of religion in the labour movement of our day; that at the very hour when religious people meet for worship, unions of hand-workers meet to deliberate on industrial problems and programs, and do not hesitate to claim that these debates are quite as instructive and uplifting as sermons. For thousands of workingmen, socialism has become a substitute for the Church; the idealism of the earthly propaganda taking the place of the vision and ideas of the religious faith.

In short, a vast amount of what must be termed a genuinely social conscience, that is of the very nature of religion, is operating wholly outside the sphere and the life of organized religion. The Church must re-incor-

porate this social idealism if it is to be true to itself. It must exhibit a social conscience sufficiently comprehensive and acute to satisfy the aspirations of all men who are passionately bent on a truer and juster social order. It is not the Church alone, however, which suffers from this independent operation of a truly social conscience. Consider, too, what such a rift means for those who are thus outside the range of the spiritual message of the Church. For them also it means sad loss and emptiness. The Church is the chief generator of the spiritual sentiment and assurance which must go hand in hand with culture and unwearied humanitarian passion in order to produce sane and sweet and strong human life.

From this point of view, it may be confidently stated that the one thing needful comes more from the sanctuary than from any other source. The Christian inspiration puts into human life a joy, a strength, a nobility that are precious and permanent. It provides a spiritual equipment of life for which, after all has been said, one looks elsewhere in vain. Religion can best sustain and discipline corporate enthusiasm. Can the social movement afford to despise it? There is no sadder sight in our modern world than the multitudes of workers, with an undoubted passion for justice and brotherhood, which is of the very essence of religion, who deny and deprive themselves of that spiritual communion with the one God and Father of us all which is the sweetening and unifying and ultimately the only satisfying assurance in human life. To have to look on as these multitudes seek to satisfy their souls with a "Marxian" creed which declares that God is evil; that the first word of religion is a lie; that Christianity is "the chloroforming agency of the confiscating classes"; that man is what he eats; that all ideas of individual holiness and responsibility to a Supreme Being are out-worn; that the only thing worth while on earth is to get all the happiness one can; and that religion with its hopes and fears and teaching of the Invisible and Eternal is an obstacle to the realization of the worker's program: this is a spectacle in the midst of the birth and labour, the sweat and the dying, the pain and the joy of human existence, so sad and pitiful that no one who even remotely shares the Saviour's sympathy can fail to participate in His compassion over the multitudes who are as sheep having no shepherd.

From all points of view, therefore, the times call for the recovery and the assertion and the operation of a social conscience in the Church which shall vindicate its claim to the loyalty of all earnest-minded men. It must satisfy the aspirations of the most passionate lovers of justice and brotherhood, touch the lives of multitudes with the spiritual quickening which they need, and thus hasten the coming among men of a truer and better social order.

Not only, however, has this pressing task been brought home to the mind of the Church, but the methods by which it is to be accomplished have also become outlined with some degree of definiteness. In a word, we know about what needs to be done in order that the conscience of the Church shall be vindicated in this matter in our modern world.

For one thing, we need a broad and thorough re-definition of religion: a new determination of the very nature of religion and of essential Christianity, which shall be genuinely acceptable both to Church leaders and teachers and these others who are not now willing to identify themselves with the Church. Religion, in a word, must give up once for all its almost exclusive preoccupation with the problems of the personal life. It must immerse itself in the fundamental questions of social righteousness and justice, political and economic equity and honour, and treat its concern in these matters, as of its very nature, as expressions of its inmost self. Even yet the definitions of religion most common are in terms either of personal piety or of Church interest and loyalty. But such conceptions are no longer adequate. Indeed, they never have been adequate to a thoroughly aroused religious conscience. An Old Testament prophet's definition of a true religion, "to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with one's God,"[7] contains only one statement concerning personal relations with God, but two requirements concerning one's relations with one's fellowmen. Religion does not have to go out of its way, that is, to deal with these matters. Rather, they are of the way of religion and must necessarily be incorporated in a true religious ideal.[8] The Church, therefore, which includes them in its message and mission is simply reclaim-

[7] See Micah 6:8.
[8] See St. James 1:27.

ing its entire patrimony, accepting its total task, and acting as the faithful mouthpiece of the full oracles of God.

The great social movements which are sweeping over the world will be recognized by history as the workings of the Spirit of God on the mind and heart of the race. They are not external to the real function of the Church, but a revelation to the Church of an hitherto undiscovered and unuttered portion of her message. The mind of the Church must always be open and its heart sensitive to every fresh unfolding of the Gospel which it is at once the Church's mission and passion to declare in its fullness. Only so will a conflict be avoided between religion and the Church; between a religion which is a fresh inspiration from the Spirit of God, and a church which merely echoes the traditions of the past. The great social forces of our day will be interpreted and understood and accepted by the Church of tomorrow as an upheaval of the depths of human experience, touched and moved by the brooding Spirit of God; as things which are essentially spiritual. No other program can be adopted by a Church which calls itself spiritual, than to direct them into channels where they may prove neither abortive nor destructive, but powerful and effective, for the good of man and for the expanding glory of God. The Church in our modern world must thus give the lie to the statement that what falls within the range of economics falls below the proper level of Church interest.

In the process, the ethics and the morals of the Church, it will be found, will need a certain expansion and enlargement.[9] The Church will discover that its definitions of goodness have not been big enough in their scope to satisfy the demands of real religion. For the Church to pronounce a man "good" who lives a respectable private life, practices a code of technical pieties and ecclesiastical proprieties, but sins in his business life and commercial relations against the most elementary principles of benevolence and brotherliness, is to employ for itself a standard of goodness far below that which the world outside the Church will admit or recognize. Until the Church makes such a man as uncomfortable as Jesus did Scribe and Pharisee who murmured against Him, it will not and

[9] See "The Conflict between Religion and the Church," by Bishop Charles D. Williams, American Magazine.

ought not to command the respect of ethically serious and earnest souls.

Similarly, with respect to its moral aims. Aside from the splendid altruism of home and foreign missions, the moral and social program of the Church has not been positive and constructive enough to satisfy those who are socially in earnest. Often, indeed, its program has seemed to be distinctly shortsighted and even petty. The Church too often appears to overlook numerous evils flourishing within sight and sound of its steeples, and to attach an exaggerated importance to matters of far less immediate ethical concern. How often have we seen Church and clergy apathetic in their attitude towards undoubted social evils, social injustices, civic corruption, corporate dishonesty, while making frenzied efforts to stop Sunday baseball? Such ethical obtuseness and misplaced moral emphasis tremendously discredit the Church. Its moral influence, in a word, has thus far been exerted too much in the way of repression and prevention. "But the real strength of Christianity is in what it affirms and achieves; and the function of the Church is not police duty in the furtherance of a set of prohibitions, but prophetic leadership into the domain of ideals that warm and inspire the soul and prompt men first to love and then to do the right." Most of us have hardly wanted to be told the truth about such evils as the prevalence of sexual sin; the abuse of marriage; the awful misuse of money in luxury and wastefulness; the wholly preventable existence of slum sections; unholy race discrimination; the exploitation of the immigrant; the insidious advantages taken of unorganized labour and the terrible pressure of poverty, even in these days of abundance and high wages upon a large majority of our labourers.

"If such matters, however, have nothing to do with the Church, then the Church has nothing to do with righteousness. The hour has come for Christian thought to add its definite sanction to the new social ethic that has been developing for the last half century. The check by common will on private greed, the care for public health, the protection of childhood and manhood, the securing of fair leisure from the monotonies of modern labour, form a program that can hardly be called radical any longer. That program has the support of all the progressive forces of the community, it forms the back-

ground of respectable modern thinking."[10] The attitude that shall be taken toward the un-Christian aspects of the modern social order thus calls for the evolution of a new definition of what it is to be "good,"[11] and for a clear understanding that the word "Christian" no longer applies to one who may be impeccable in his private life but is a pagan in his social relations.

Once more, the method by which the Church will bring its message to bear upon the modern social problem has become clear. The Church will imitate the method of Jesus Himself. The Gospels contain little or no discussion of the details of the social problems of the day. Rather one discovers in them certain inclusive spiritual principles applicable to the social problems of His time and of all time. The Church therefore will not engage in economic debates or discuss controversial aspects of the social question. Instead, its message will proceed from the circumference straight to the centre. It will consist in a thorough interpretation of the reach and meaning of the spiritual principles of Jesus, and it will insist upon an equally trenchant application of them.

Some time ago, a distinguished New Testament student in a paper, entitled "The Radicalism of Jesus,"[12] took the position that the contribution of Jesus to the moral and spiritual life of the world lay not so much in the announcement of new ideas, as in carrying out to their ultimate consequences ideas already in the possession of the Jewish people. Doubtless much of the originality of Jesus lies in the fresh revelation of truth that results from the radical application of familiar ideas. And it may safely be said that the chief function of the Church today is not to evolve new ideas but to carry out to their ultimate consequences ideas with which it has long been familiar. This is the kind of radicalism that is needed in the Church today, and the only kind. To this degree, every Christian preacher and disciple should be a religious radical in our modern world, for it constitutes the unique and distinct contribution which the Church has to make to the social problem.

[10] By permissoin from "The Church and the Hour," pp. 53–54, by Vida D. Scudder. Copyright by E. P. Dutton and Company.

[11] See "The Church and Industrial Reconstruction," pp. 34–80.

[12] By James Hardy Ropes.

Consider, for example, the simple, undeniable teaching of Jesus concerning the supreme value of every human life. That idea may be found, perhaps, in the latest pages of the Old Testament; it is brought out with startling clearness in the teaching of Jesus. Human life, any human life, the most insignificant apparently or the most hopeless, is literally a Pearl of Great Price[13] for which the Son of Man gave all that He had to give. Silvester Horne has well called this "a Romantic Creed." It is equal to an affirmation "that the soul of every forced labourer on the Amazon is of more value than all the diamonds of Kimberly, all the millions of all the magnates of America. In God's sight, all the suns and stars that people infinite space, it declares, are of inferior worth to one human spirit dwelling, it may be, in the degraded body of some victim of drink or lust."[14]

Imagine now the Church in its teaching, and the Christian disciple in his living, carrying this principle of Jesus to its furthest implications out into modern social conditions. Could anything more "radical" be desired by the most passionate seeker for social justice? Could anything be more simply Christian? It would mean a love of men and little children on the part of the Church quite different from the generalized and poetisized forms of love manifest in repetition of Bible verses and the singing of hymns. The whole influence of a Church which insisted upon carrying out this one idea of Jesus would be thrown against a housing-system for the poor which is responsible for a death-rate of children under five years of age as high as ninety-two per thousand, compared with an average death-rate of only fifty-one per thousand; which condemns thirty-five per thousand to death from tuberculosis, whereas the proportion of deaths in the community, as a whole, is as low as five in a thousand.[15]

A Church which takes this one principle of Jesus in earnest cannot survey with complacency a procession of one million children marching out of their homes, not

[13] For this interpretation of the Parable, see Wolcott Calkins, "Parables for Our Times," pp. 14 ff.

[14] C. Silvester Horne, "The Romance of Preaching," pp. 112–113.

So Lecky in his "History of European Morals" (Vol. 2, pp. 19, 21), says that the idea of the infinite value of any human life is the supreme contribution which Christianity makes to every part of human society to which it gains entrance.

[15] Harry F. Ward, "The Gospel for a Working World," p. 22.

to schools or to play-grounds, but to the grimy interior of factories or other forms of gainful occupation, a sheer immolation of childhood on the altar of industrial greed. It must also put forth its fully mobilized strength to modify an economic system which kills thirty-five hundred miners and thousands of railroad employees in a year,—a proportion far in excess of that of any other civilized land.[16] And slowly, it may be, but none the less surely, it will adopt a unanimously hostile attitude toward the war-system as a means of settling the international quarrels of the world.

Similar will be its attitude with respect to Jesus' teachings concerning justice and brotherhood. These, too, lie not only upon the surface of the Gospel teaching, but their application—to our shame—also does not go below the surface of our present social order. To apply them, in teaching and practice in their fullness, which is plainly the function of the Church, is to revolutionize certain aspects of the present economic status. The application of the principle of justice may not require the abolition of private property, but it will certainly mean the profound modification of a system which concentrates 60 per cent of the wealth of the United States in the hands of 2 per cent of the population, while two-thirds of the people control but 6 per cent of it. Present inequalities, in possession and in opportunity, are too flagrant to be reconciled with any understanding of the principle of justice and fair-dealing. Neither can the principle of brotherhood be brought into harmony with the present social and racial divisions which cut across modern society. Jesus taught that the Jew was a brother of the Samaritan, and Dives of Lazarus and Simon, of the woman who was a sinner. In what degree, it may well be asked, judged by these standards, can modern society be called Christian?

Or, will a truly Christian Church look upon the Industrial Workers of the World, for example, as outlaws and anarchists with little or no title to consideration and respect, and leave it to outside social observers to plead their cause? The immigrant, the Negro, the criminal, the alien—here are other segments of our complex population which need and ought to receive that kind of recognition and understanding which so bound the unloved to the Person of Christ. It is not a question of get-

[16] Harry F. Ward, ibid., pp. 4, 5.

ting all these to worship under one roof; it is a question of that passion for democracy which, spiritually interpreted, is universal brotherhood. The point here is whether the Church tends to become more and more mere machinery for the Sunday recreation of the well-fed and well-dressed, or whether the Church shall be known by its conduct as a friend of publicans and sinners. Is it true that her associations are all with the "saved"? Jesus' were not. Is it true that her mission seems to be to call the righteous to patient continuance in well-doing, and not sinners to welcome and repentance? Is it true that the Church is the rendezvous of the respected and respectable, that it is class-conscious, and devoid of a comprehension and inclusiveness that begin to compare with those of a universal brotherhood?

In such an application of His teaching, the Church would be no more, but also no less, revolutionary than Christ Himself. Its duty is simply to face the modern economic world with the trenchant judgments of its Master. It must replace a conscience which has been too complacent with the piercing conscience of Christ Himself. "The modern Church," it has well been said, "has its choice: it can travel the conventional path and suffer increasing loss of influence; or it can enter upon renewed study of its origin, learn the meaning of the Gospel of Jesus, and help to inspire men with a high and holy enthusiasm to make the world a better place for the children of God." The distinctive contribution which the Church will make to the solution of the social problem, that is, will consist in an authoritative, searching and uncompromising announcement of the underlying spiritual principles of the Gospel. This constitutes its part in the work. And if this faithful witness puts it at variance with the economic theories "on which society now more or less uneasily reposes," then all that can be said about the Church is, that it dares to be Christian.

Neither is it meant that the Church will content itself with mere generalizations, and never directly attack existing social evils. It will denounce specific evils in our modern world as pointedly as the Old Testament prophets condemned the sins of Israel. Yet by holding in the main to the method of Jesus in His approach to the social problem, the teaching of the Church will be delivered alike from the reproach that its spiritual note has dis-

appeared, and its pulpit has become a secular rostrum for the discussion of "current events," and, also, from the reproach that it is trying to discuss questions about which it is not really informed. Without doubt congregations do suffer from ill-considered and often really ignorant discussions from the pulpit of social questions. People are really neither quickened nor awakened by such ranting.

It is a pity, too, that the Church should take a partisan stand on policies upon which Christians may honestly disagree. "Such honest Christians ought not to have their freedom of thinking violated by ex-cathedra pronouncements from the Church. . . . In this new function of social guidance on which the Church is seemingly entering, while clear as to principles and ends, she needs to practice very delicate discrimination as to ways and means. A party fight, to gain by the endorsement of the Church for this measure or that program is an attractive short-cut to social Christianity, but it is a short-cut that leads to By-Ends' Meadows and will end by plunging the Church into the morass of politics."[17]

[17] By permission from Vida D. Scudder, ibid., p. 22. Copyright by E. P. Dutton and Company. Similarly, Dr. C. E. Jefferson writes, "Preachers do not make haste to lift up their voices as umpires and judges in industrial disputes, because they do not feel competent to pass judgment on these intricate matters. Disputes between men are nearly always complicated. So much dust is kicked up, it is difficult to see clearly. There is usually justice on both sides, and wrong on both sides. Both sides are more or less selfish, and more or less dominated by passion, and the situation gets into a snarl because of the lack of considerateness and patience and good feeling on both sides. Moreover, the air becomes filled with rumors and gossip and imaginings, so that it is well-nigh impossible to know what to believe. To pass an equitable judgment, therefore, is far from easy. There must be a thorough investigation. A huge mass of testimony must be sifted in order to arrive at data on which a valid conclusion can be built. Now, incredible though it seems, a clergyman is one of the busiest men in the community. There is no eight-hour day for him. His parish duties are exacting and exhausting, and he has no time to make the investigation which would give him a right to set himself up as a judge in industrial quarrels." Quoted in Durant Drake, op. cit., p. 56.

The task thus imposed upon the Christian minister who desires faithfully to interpret and apply the teachings

of Jesus, is one of undoubted difficulty. It requires both courage and tact. If he lack courage, he fails as the spokesman of that Gospel which alone can remedy the social ills of our day, and he has proved himself incapable of moral leadership. On the other hand, if tact and discrimination are absent, he is equally sure to fail. By a program of undiscerning and ill-considered attack, he is sure to irritate and ultimately to alienate the very people whose confidence and loyalty it is his duty to secure.

It is by no means always true to say that congregations which grow restive under social exhortation do so because they are a stiff-necked and reprobate people, or that, because they hunger for a spiritual message, they are indifferent or even hostile to the social needs of our modern world. The fault is quite as likely to rest with their leader as with them. A wise leader and teacher of religion will show no lack of moral courage, but he will exhibit also patience, insight and a sense of proportion. The average congregation will respond to almost any well-informed message which is thoughtful and sincere, but the true interpreter of the Gospel to our modern world will not harp on one string but vary that message to suit the differing needs of men and the manifold aspects of the truth which he seeks to utter. There must be this combination of sincerity and wisdom upon the part of the teachers of religion if this generation of Christians shall be led forward into the full understanding and practice of the social principles of Jesus.

Difficulty in interpreting and applying the social teachings of Jesus, however, confronts the layman just as truly as it does the Christian minister. All Christians intent upon this task will first of all find it necessary to cultivate the open mind. The charge must be disproved that Church people will listen to any reasoning which even remotely suggests that the present social and industrial order needs to be changed, can be changed, or shall be changed. "When there are so many un-Christian aspects of the present economic system, we must guard against a too rigid orthodoxy in defending the *status quo*. Almost more than any other thing, we need an honest discussion of social problems and proposed solutions."[18] The Church indeed should be the one place in the community where an honest, fair-minded advocate of a more direct

[18] "The Church and Industrial Reconstruction," p. 130.

application of plain Christian principles to social conditions may be heard and not called names of any kind, or accused of treason or sedition. To be sure, Jesus did not have such a hearing in the synagogue at Nazareth. Would a disciple of Jesus, plainly filled with His spirit and passion, find different and more hospitable hearers facing him in the Church today? The closed mind, as things are now, is a greater social menace than the closed shop. And the Christian will always be ready to hear and be on his guard "lest motives of self-interest warp his moral judgments, for that is what self-interest always tends to do."[19]

For the Church is to be no respecter of persons any more than was Christ, Himself. It is to utter its message of love, of brotherhood and of justice, cut where it may. The democracy for which it stands, will tolerate neither the dictation of capital nor of labour. If it rebukes the capitalist who still talks of "hiring hands," or substitutes "welfare work" for the ideals of a fundamental partnership in the great processes of production, manufacture and distribution, it will rebuke, also, organizations of labour which are themselves unfraternal and undemocratic in their outlook and program and threaten to overturn the very structure of society for ends which are admittedly material and selfish.

The Church will talk to men—all men—not of their rights and privileges so much as of their duties and obligations. It will hew close to the line, let the chips fall where they may. It will never take sides: or rather, it will take the side of the line where Jesus stands. The line which He drew was not a horizontal line. Horizontal lines divide men into upper and lower, rich and poor, master and servant, educated and ignorant, native and foreign. But the perpendicular line which Jesus drew pierces these horizontal lines at right angles and talks only of right and left, darkness and light, sin and righteousness, right and wrong, justice and injustice, selfishness and unselfishness, life and death. To speak with the accent of Christ is to take sides with Christ.

Such a position is sure to leave many radical minds dissatisfied with the Church. "Those who cling to the Marxian belief that substantial progress is won only by the rebellion of the oppressed, will scorn the appeal to disin-

[19] "The Church and Industrial Reconstruction," p. 191.

terested action. Nor are the Marxians alone. Whether one looks at nations or at classes, [one finds] a widespread feeling that no group of men will ever act contrary to their own interests, and that the future of the world must be determined by balance of greeds . . . [Many] feel that the slow pressure of the working classes toward power is the one effective hope for freedom; and they think that the most useful thing for a lover of justice to do is to unclass himself and to throw in his lot with the proletarian struggle."[20] But the Church has a different program for the rebuilding of the world. "When the Church utters the spiritual message of Jesus, she is not thinking in terms of class at all. What is in her mind is no movement to which she is driven by the sharp prong of economic distress, it is rather a general movement impelled by such single-hearted passion for justice as should be common to all people."[20]

Again the Church will make its contribution to the solution of the social problem not only by trenchant and hospitable Christian thinking, but by sincere and heroic efforts at Christian living. The first is, of course, far easier than the second. It is not very difficult for one who is in earnest, to discover what are the underlying spiritual principles of the teaching of Jesus. Neither, though more difficult, ought it to be impossible to cultivate an open-minded mental attitude in the discussion of the application of these principles. Nothing short of real heroism, however, will suffice when one contemplates the practical revision of one's daily conduct in the light of these principles of Jesus. We are all so enmeshed in the network of the present economic status, that the effort to square one's conduct in the practical relationships of life with these quite different principles becomes a tremendous problem. Upon the degree, however, to which the disciples of Jesus in our churches seriously and courageously attempt to do this very thing, depends the vindication of the conscience of the Church in the eyes of our modern world.

Inconsistency between professed Christian discipleship and actual social practice constitutes the most serious obstacle to real Church advance in our day. Moral heat in the pulpit is no substitute for ethical fire and common

[20] By permission from Vida D. Scudder, ibid., pp. 24–25. Copyright by E. P. Dutton and Company.

righteousness in the pews. "If the Christian Church wants to convince the world of the supreme value of its ideal of love, it can only do so by steadily confronting the world with the actual thing. Supposing that the love which shines in certain individual Christian lives became general in the Christian society—a quickening of emotion and will which could be called love, not in any pale metaphorical sense but in literal truth, a force shaping all conduct and social organization, heightening all life with an inexhaustible interest and energy—there would perhaps not be much need for books of Christian evidences."[21] While it may take centuries of moral evolution before any one can be fully Christian in this world no one need wait an hour before undertaking to be more Christian than he now is. To this point he will address himself, with sincere and passionate earnestness.

This is the work the Church should enter upon wholesale, raising up hosts of men and women prepared to do just this thing, and thus show the world how improved standards of social performance work out in actual operation. The weakness of the Church in this connection is evident from the mere fact that Church membership is not yet, of itself, a guarantee of conduct in advance of the conventional standards of social ethics. The strength and power, possible to the Church, are revealed by asking the question, Suppose it were? Suppose that Church adherence were a guarantee that an employer would endeavour to pay a living wage to his least employee; that a servant would be sure to receive considerate treatment in the home; that a man, if elected to office, could be depended upon to give unselfish and courageous service to society no matter how it affected his personal fortunes. Suppose that Church membership were, of itself, a guarantee of practices like these? Can anyone doubt that the doing of these or a hundred other things as possible, would enormously enhance the influence of the Church witness on all matters of public policy? In a word, were Church people simply to pursue the course of conduct plainly marked out for them by the principles of Jesus, "they would make their Christianity so visible a fact, as to force it on the recognition of everyone. They would live as on a mountain set on high for all to see, as their Master pictured them, instead of mingling, contentedly to all

[21] Edwyn Bevan, "Hellenism and Christianity," p. 273.

appearance, as they mostly do now, indistinguishably with the run of men. . . . [The Church's] work is not to announce new economic theories, it is only incidentally to approve specific programs. It is to insist that her children sift theories uncompromisingly in the light of Christian idealism; it is, above all, to offer the incentive which shall draw men to try the Great Adventure of Christian living in terms of the new age."[22]

From more than one point of view, then, the Church has claims today upon all who are putting themselves behind the program for social justice. These workers for social justice will see in the Church a promising field for missionary work and education in the fundamental principles of social justice. The very fact that our Protestant churches contain today a large proportion of those who support and are measurably satisfied with the present industrial order, offers, for those who believe that this order needs radical modification, a fair field for social penetration. At least, it is an open question from this angle whether they ought to turn their backs upon it.

If the foregoing paragraph seems to present a one-sided view, a balance may be struck by suggesting that the social movement, itself, may well need the corrective of the undeniable conservatism of the Church. In a day of radical social experimentation, the ultimate value of much of which for human society is at least uncertain, the stabilizing influence of an institution which lends itself only gradually to the support of new social theory before it is sure that humanity's accumulated social capital is going to be conserved, can hardly be denied. The Church has often been called unfairly the enemy of progress just because it has never conceived its rôle to be that of skirmisher in either intellectual or social advance. This accusation overlooks the equal necessity for any permanent progress of conserving the ground already gained and of making sure of territory which it is proposed to occupy.

Again, the Church offers some assurance that our social theories will not resolve themselves into something sectional or partial in their attack and outlook. The radical who calls the Church subservient to capitalism and thinks of its ministers as private chaplains to religious clubs of capitalists; who says that the Cross, once the symbol of

[22] By permission from Vida D. Scudder, ibid., pp. 29, 30. Copyright by E. P. Dutton and Company.

civilization, is now the symbol of slavery, and that Christianity and capitalism are the two curses of our time, indicates clearly his own incompetence to provide either the temper or the theory that will ultimately prove sufficiently catholic to meet our social needs. Grant that the churches have not sympathies which are sufficiently inclusive; and also that there is much real religion outside their walls. But there is also considerable within them. And the question may well be asked if that ultimate social attitude for which we wait will not be sooner reached by the expansion of the religion which is already there than by any form of religion which cuts itself off from the deepest sources of inspiration and tends to lose hold, if not to lose sight, of the ultimate spiritual sanctions.

For it is the faith which sees the New Jerusalem descend from above, which alone will be found equal in the end to our social task. There is no social substitute here for the Christian inspiration and the Christian revelation. Christianity's most distinctive contribution to the solution of the social problem lies in its unflinching faith that human ideals are not airy nothings, but are destined to be realized. "For the Christian, they are not goals of human imagining. They are grounded in creation itself; they are part of God's plan for the world."[23] They are authenticated by the passion of Christ which is the promise of their ultimate fulfillment. The world has no spiritual ground outside the Church for an all-conquering social optimism to compare with that which sees in the word "It is finished," or in the promise "I am with you to the completion of the world," the assurance of a new world in which dwelleth righteousness.

Nor can we find outside the Church forces at work which seem to guarantee that moralization of the members of society upon which its ultimate salvation depends.[24] In order to have a cooperative commonwealth, we must have a cooperative man. The only hope that this world will ever be a better world is that people like you and me somehow will become better men and women. "Good men," said Mazzini, "make bad organizations good, and bad men make good organizations bad." If we really want the new world we must provide the new men to make it. And where lies the power outside the Christian cultus that can

[23] "The Church and Industrial Reconstruction," p. 113.
[24] Ibid., pp. 173, 178.

be depended upon to give us a new creature? To say that the Christian cultus has not thus far given us a sufficient number of new creatures to make the new world will not do. The further questions remain: Is not the power there to do it? Is there power anywhere else to do it? If, upon careful analysis, the first question be answered in the affirmative, and the second question be answered in the negative, perhaps no further exposition will be needed to indicate the social mission of the Church in our modern world.

Chapter VI

THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

"With curious regularity," Joseph Fort Newton has remarked, "every age has bewailed the passing of the pulpit. . . . When Mahaffy wrote the 'Decay of Modern Preaching,' in 1882, Parker, Liddon, Spurgeon, Maclaren, Beecher, Brooks, . . . were in the full splendour of their powers. . . . The chorus of complaint has been unusually loud in our time as witness these words of the London Times: 'If the great sermons which contain the philosophy of Bishop Butler were preached today, would they fill the smallest church in London? For the present, at least, the noble art of the pulpit must be considered as lost. There exists for it neither favourable conditions nor the indispensable audience nor even the artists themselves. It awaits like so many other of the arts, like great painting, like great poetry, the return of the mind of Europe to an assured and all-pervading religious faith.' Thus the London Times joins in the litany of lament that the pulpit of today is in eclipse."[1] Then follow chapters in which Dr. Newton effectively disproves this thesis that the pulpit has lost its power.

When one descends, however, from the altitude of the acknowledged masters of the pulpit to the more ordinary levels, the problem of preaching does begin to become a portentous one. Even so, there is much to be said for modern preaching. It is neither as intellectually trivial or spiritually sterile as many people would have us believe. Indeed, under the circumstances which today surround the preparation of sermons by the average parish minister, it is a wonder that the preaching is as good as it really is. With this said, however, it cannot be denied that the sermon is often a weekly problem to the church-goer as well as to the preacher.

[1] Joseph Fort Newton, "Some Living Masters of the Pulpit," VII, VIII.

Ultimately, the preaching of the Church must be judged by its ability to arouse, and to apply adequate moral and spiritual motives. The difficulty, however, according to many people, with much of the Christian preaching of the day is that it does not arouse anything. They say that it does not strike any spiritual note directly enough or strongly enough to awaken any response whatsoever. It leaves the hearer exactly where it found him, perhaps a little more bewildered or exasperated than he was before.[2] Dean Hodges used to say in his humorous fashion that the sentence in the baptismal service which requires of parents and sponsors that they would cause the child to "hear sermons" was the signal for the child to begin to wail. It is a lamentable fact that the sermon is the difficulty which stands in the way of a good many people, otherwise well disposed toward the Church.

Without doubt, the importance of the sermon has been enormously exaggerated in the Christian cultus. Protestant churches, especially, have come to rely too utterly upon it as an almost exclusive means of Christian inspiration. This caused Lyman Abbott once to remark that it was the "fundamental irreverence of Puritanism that it made the worship of Almighty God to be but the portico to a sermon," and only lately moved Dr. Francis E. Clark to write that "our non-conformist ancestors did us a disservice by putting an undue emphasis upon the sermon."[3] The exactions of the sermon are making a demand on the ministry which is unreasonable and inhuman. Also they are detracting from the appeal of the Church itself. The spectacle of a considerable portion of the church-going community flocking, from this church to that, to "hear" a preacher who promises some added thrill is not one to encourage optimism in regard to the Church of the future. It would probably be a wholesome reform for more churches to have services without sermons, and for a Christian people to be trained to look upon the Church as a House of Prayer rather than as an "auditorium."

None the less, Christian preaching has from the first been an integral part of the Christian cultus, and it remains today, just as it always has been, one of the unique prerogatives of the Church, and a powerful means for the

[2] See Van Dyke, "Days Off," pp. 312 ff.
[3] "The Menace of the Sermon," Yale Review, October, 1922.

spiritual education of its members. The Church cannot hope to maintain itself at the apex of its possible ministry to our modern world unless its prophetic voice can still be heard.

Precisely that prophetic note is most often lacking. Too much modern preaching is a bit of intellectual ratiocination emptied of all spiritual insight and passion; or a series of commonplaces pieced together at the last moment to use up the time allotted to the sermon; or the presentment of old doctrines in an outworn theological vocabulary, with no expenditure of ability or effort to discover the vital truth in them and offer it in language familiar and welcome to modern ears.

New Testament preaching was none of these things. The Gospel preached there was literally "good news." Recall the day when Greece was threatened with destruction by the army of Xerxes; recall the battle of Marathon where the destinies of a whole civilization were determined; bring to remembrance that runner who arrived exhausted at the city of Athens crying with his last breath "Victory, Victory," and the extraordinary effect of that day's events upon the Athenian population gives you an accurate idea on the κηρυχμα of the early Church. To people who sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death, it brought good tidings of redemption and release. The early Christian preaching was filled from beginning to end with the triumphant conviction that something new had happened which literally guaranteed the emancipation of the soul from the tyranny of circumstance, of sin and of death.

The absence of this prophetic note is perhaps the most fatal lack in modern preaching. People will pardon almost everything else if they can hear that accent of triumph. Its absence led an editorial writer in one of our dailies not long ago to ask why one heard nowadays in the churches many essays and not a few orations but so seldom a sermon. Its presence led Phillips Brooks, after he had heard George Macdonald, to write: "There were all the good and there were all the bad elements in the man's style; manly, rugged honesty, with some tendency to sentimentality. But, over and through it all, there was this quality: it was a message from God by him to those people. The man struggled as a child struggles with his imperfectly mastered tongue that will not tell the errand

as he received it and had it in his mind. As I listened, I seemed to see how weak in contrast was the way in which other preachers had amused me or challenged my admiration by the working of their minds. But here was a real Gospel, here were real tidings."[4] It is such spiritual prophecy, acting as the intermediary of the mind of Christ, that opens the door to the mind and heart of the hearer of our day.

It is not altogether the preacher's fault if he fails, week after week, to strike the high and difficult spiritual note which, alone, can bring the response from the human heart. Our Protestant churches are so organized that the exercise of the gift of spiritual prophecy is made difficult if not impossible. Indeed, it is hard to see how the average parish minister can ever be a prophet at all.[5] He is the business manager of his parish, with an infinity of details to attend to; he is expected to make as many visits as a doctor usually makes in a day; he is called upon to serve his "denomination" on various boards, and his community on as various committees; he is responsible for the religious education of the children of the parish and must devote hours of his time in attending to personal cases of maladjustment. If he can, let him find the large amounts of time required for that reading, quiet meditation and inward brooding over the things of the spirit out of which a true spiritual preaching is born. Manifestly, the thing cannot be done. Manifestly, the proposal is a contradiction in terms.

One is reminded of James Russell Lowell's remark that to be a poet and a diplomat at the same time "is as if a sitting hen should have to mind the door bell."[6] Church worshippers who lament the uninspired nature of the Sunday preaching to which they listen would do well to acquaint themselves with the endless labours to which their church organization condemns the man from whom they anticipate week by week a fresh message from the heart of God. At least the inconsistency of those who make the sermon the chief reason for church-going, and at the same time, acquiesce in a system which makes a

[4] "Lectures on Preaching," p. 16.

[5] See "Human or Superhuman," by Charles M. Sheldon, Atlantic Monthly.

[6] "Letters of James Russell Lowell," Vol. 2, p. 267.

real sermon almost impossible, ought, in sheer justice, to be pointed out.[7]

No way out of this difficulty has as yet been found by Protestantism. Possibly a way cannot be found until a greater degree of unity has been accomplished between Protestant churches than any yet attained. The possibility of reviving the ancient distinction between the offices of pastor and teacher; of having men distinguished for spiritual gifts, set aside for preaching, and given a real liberty to prophesy, free from all bondage to a particular parish, has often been suggested. That may be the only solution of the problem for a Church which exalts its preaching ministry, and at the same time, by its organization and method, now makes it impossible of its highest realization.

Yet this is not said to excuse either ignorance or carelessness on the part of any one whose highest office is to herald the good things of God. Even the most harassed parish minister, doubtless, has it in him to communicate more of the grace of God than he often does. If he keep it alive in his own heart, he will find means to make it a living reality in the hearts of others. When the Apostle Paul admonished Timothy to guard "that good thing"[8] which was committed to him by the Holy Spirit, it was precisely this living treasure of an actual spiritual experience that he had in mind. For a preacher to substitute the ethics of the class-room or the pure intellectualism of the schools for the proclamation of the Gospel is to be untrue to his calling. Of course, if he has had no personal experience of it, he cannot proclaim it in the terms of personal experience. But in that case he has no right to occupy the office of Christian preacher. He who has such experience, should study how to declare it. Too many preachers forget that a sermon was not meant to be a work of art. All that it was meant to be is a piece of bread.[9] Be it ever so simple or homely, if there is evidence behind it of the passion of one who has caught some vision of God and has a longing to tell others, it will

[7] For a thoughtful, though somewhat radical discussion of the possibility of a professional and prophetic ministry, the reader is referred to "The Professional Ministry," Edward Lewis, Atlantic Monthly.

[8] II Timothy 1:14.

[9] Charles E. Jefferson, "The Minister as Shepherd," p. 76.

contain the one thing needful. It is for this living bread that hungry sheep are waiting.[10]

An intellectualism devoid of spiritual insight is not, however, the only fault in modern preaching. It is marked also by a ranting fervour, born of theological mediaevalism, apparently ignorant of the modern interpretation of the universe, or, if not ignorant, plainly hostile to it. The disastrous effects may be suggested here by a concrete case which is full of pathos and even tragedy. A young man or woman, trained in modern ways of thinking, with real Christian conviction, and undoubted loyalty to the Church, returns to his home town, remote, it may be, from centres of culture and education, to find his minister talking in a vocabulary wholly different from his own.

The situation has been well expressed by President Faunce: "If the preacher habitually thinks of God as the 'magnified hero' of Genesis, while the hearer thinks of Him as 'indwelling presence'; if the preacher thinks of creation as a finished fact, and the hearer thinks of it as present process; if to the one man, the Bible is a rock, and to the other, a growth; if one man thinks of all truth as induction from first principles, and the other thinks of truth as induction from observed facts; if to one man duty is a disagreeable task imposed by authority, and to the other is a mode of self-realization and the only path to joy; if to one man the world is Satan's seat, and to the other the presence chamber of God; if one man thinks of prayer as a way of getting desirable presents, and the other thinks of it as the communion of spirits; if one man looks upon Christ's sacrifice as the great exception to all law, and the other thinks of it as the supreme exemplification of law—then the preacher may be wrong, or the hearer may be wrong; but certainly, as they speak different languages, neither can be of much help to the other. And this is the situation in scores of . . . communities in America.

"The ministers are depressed by what they understand to be antipathy to religion on the part of college students. The students are bewildered by hearing one world-view in the Church and another in the college."[11] This "bewilder-

[10] See Ian Maclaren, "Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush," "His Mother's Sermon."

[11] "The Educational Ideal in the Ministry," W. H. P. Faunce, pp. 65–66.

ment" is a widespread form of suffering today. How is the college student to think his way out of it, or, even more important, what is he to do about it? It is both a question of integrating these two points of view in his mind and of reconciling them in his life. Under these conditions, what shall he do about church-going? To what degree will he, by his presence, seem to endorse a teaching which affronts all of the premises of his thinking? How can he continue to attend or to support a Church which talks a different language from his own?

Again, one cannot put all the blame on the ministry for this lamentable state of affairs. One must look to the churches which produce and equip and support them. It is no cause of surprise that a minister does not speak the language of modern thought if he has had no opportunity to learn it. How expect a minister to have an education and at the same time fail to provide the means? The average salary of the rural minister today in American churches does not exceed, if indeed it equals, $1,000. A surprisingly large number of these men are not college graduates, nor have they attended a theological seminary; they are the product of Bible Schools, correspondence courses, or "Institutes" which provide the most meagre preparation and background, through courses of study that make use of little modern scholarship.

This problem of the Christian ministry and the light of modern knowledge is one which must be solved if the Church is to retain its intellectual and moral leadership.[12] The equipment and endowment of theological schools able to do this needed work; the requirement of a training and discipline for ordination, which will enable the minister to understand and interpret the growing results of the world's scholarship, and the provision for this education where it is lacking, has become a task of supreme importance. For how can the Church hope to retain the loyalty of the constantly increasing number of the educated youth of the

[12] A searching study of this whole subject has recently been made under the auspices of the Institute of Social and Religious Research and the secretarial staff of the Council of Church Boards of Education. A volume bearing the title "Theological Education in America," has been published, written by Robert L. Kelly, LL.D., containing the results of this investigation of the education of the Protestant ministry in America.

country, unless its ministry can preach religion to them in thought forms which they can accept?

In a word, the intellectual and spiritual task of the modern ministry is one of the utmost intricacy. In it must be united "the instinct of spiritual interpretation and the capacity for ethical leadership," and both of these must rest on a developed capacity for hard thinking. "On the one side of the minister is the world's scholarship, whose method he must understand, whose growing results he must keep close at hand. On the other side is the human group committed to his charge, souls struggling, sinning, aspiring, crying, for a clew to life's maze and a lift in its burden-bearing. Between these two stands the minister, not as middleman—a timorous and commercial designation! —but as embodying in himself the higher synthesis of knowledge and sympathy, of scholarship and character. He sees that the world of scholarship is sometimes given to extremes, that it may become arrogant or reckless. He sees that the human group before him are sometimes blind and deaf to the truths they most need. In the minister, knowledge becomes humanized, and humanity is led deeper into knowledge. The care for truth and the cure of souls meet in the heart of the minister."[13]

The enrollment and equipment of a ministry capable of such a task is a necessity for the Christian Church in our modern world. We need a union of scholarship and evangelical fervour; of intellectual fibre and background and spiritual simplicity and directness, such as can be seen today in the best Scotch and English preachers. "But, in America, too often knowledge and zeal have been sundered. In college and seminary are learned linguistic teachers, seldom heard outside the classroom, who never grapple with the woe and sin of our great cities, never face their fellows in their primitive human hungers and passions. Such men can teach paradigms better than they can expound the gospel.

"On the other hand, Christian workers who have not spent two consecutive hours in study for many years, by their pious philistinism, are steadily widening the breach between intelligence and devotion. They defend the faith by railing at science; militantly affirm their belief in the Bible 'from cover to cover'; and after an attack upon evolution and the higher criticism, sit down in complacent

[13] Faunce, ibid., pp. 66–67.

perspiration with consciousness of duty done. But is either extreme either good or necessary? What is knowledge worth, save as it comes from life and leads to life? Where will life end, if it be not an ever-advancing progress into truth?"

The practical question remains for solution, What shall a person do while his church provides preaching which does not interest or inspire? A possible, but often neglected, way out of the undoubted difficulty which many people suffer over sermons, is to treat them as a part of the worship, rather than as the whole of it. Another, is to listen to the advice of Theodore Roosevelt: "Remember that if you do not hear a good sermon, the chances are that you are hearing a sermon from a good man." Or, one may show the charity of George Herbert:

> "The worst speak something good:
> If all want sense
> God takes the text and preacheth patience."

A mixture in the hearer of the spirit of real humility, of intellectual charitableness and a sincere breadth of sympathy and understanding, will often extract from even the crudest discourse some spiritual nourishment. Care must be taken to see that the consciousness of a superior intellectual outlook does not make one impervious to real spiritual appeal. Those who are the most truly educated are also the most patient and hospitable in their attitude as listeners, on the alert always for some valuable truth to issue from the most unlikely source. Let the whole intellectual background of the sermon be at variance with one's own, and, therefore, listening to the sermon itself be dull work, there is always the possibility that something, said in an otherwise dull sermon, may suggest, in a blinding flash, a phase of truth within the outer husk of the words which will be treasured for half a life-time. There will be some truth essential to human life and welfare which may have eluded the speaker that an acute hearer may detect for himself.

The most uninspired and apparently unenlightened of preachers is still in his own way seeking to present truths without which society would be unsafe and human lives would be hopelessly bereft. It is to these that, by church attendance, hearers give their sanction; it is to these that they give their support, not to particular forms in which

they may be clothed. "There is more relevance than business men realize in the apparently cynical remark of a friend of mine: 'I stand for the Church, not because I believe in Heaven, but because I believe in earth. It is cheaper to pay preachers than policemen, and it is always more economical to support pulpits than prisons. I always contribute to the churches, and charge it to my insurance account.'"[14] If the author of this remark had a view of life with a bit more of horizon to it, he would know that he had made a tenfold better investment than he was capable of figuring out. From this point of view, indeed, the ministry of the most backward church is entitled to the loyalty of the most forward-looking men and women of our time.

The preaching of the Church, however, is only a part of its total teaching ministry. There remains its educational program with the children and the youth of the community. What is the quality of this teaching?, we may rightly ask. To what degree does it actually develop religious intelligence and supply adequate moral motives? The Church is the only institution in any community which makes religious education its sole business. With what success is this work being done? In the minds of most competent observers, this is one of the weakest points in the ministry of the Church to our modern world. Its work of religious education is admittedly performed in an inadequate, haphazard and ineffective way. Those who are most actively engaged in the teaching work of the Church are most ready to admit that thus far the Church has not begun to do this work as it needs to be done.[15]

The average young American's ignorance of the contents of his Bible is a matter of current jest and need not detain us. To say that the boys and girls of our churches know something of ancient Greek and Roman history, and are familiar with the names of the kings of England while they know nothing of the history of the Hebrews and have only a casual acquaintance with the life of Christ, does not touch the real seriousness of the

[14] "The Economic Crime of the Protestant Church," Atlantic Monthly.

[15] See "The Religious Education of Protestants in an American Commonwealth," by Walter F. Athearn and others. Geo. H. Doran Co., N. Y.

situation. The real source of our concern is the fact that a generation of youth is growing up in our churches who are densely ignorant of the Christian religion, and lack the outfit of simple, direct motives, of moral and spiritual sanctions necessary to sober and godly living.[16]

Multitudes of young men and women who have had the average church and "Sunday School" experience, are living clean, healthy, vigorous lives in many ways, but so far as having a living, working set of religious principles in control of their thoughts and purposes is concerned, they can only be classed as young pagans. They have ideas, of their own creation, of right and wrong; they have explanations, more or less thought out and intellectualized, why it is well to do this, and not well to do that; they bewilder their elders with snap moral and ethical judgments, which diverge sharply from the traditional and the conventional code. Their system of personal ethics has been framed more from social observation than from the study of books or the teaching of religion. None of this is to their discredit, and as far at it goes, it is sound and wholesome. Yet they really lack the one thing indispensable, a sense of living from a principle within, and for a purpose which they have chosen because they recognize that the system of things demands it of them. They own up that they can not pass these two tests of the reality of the religious life: (1) moral behaviour which is the result of the working of an adequate moral motive, and (2) the consciousness of a God-given mission that proceeds toward the fulfillment of a God-sent task.

Here is the most conspicuous weakness of the religious teaching in our day. Great hosts of young people today simply do not know the meaning of religion in this sense. To them it is a venerable tradition, or an outward observance, or a conglomeration of beliefs which the world has more or less outgrown, or of habits which so far as they can see "do not do anyone very much good." Church-going is done by them almost solely for family reasons

[16] Thus a teacher in one of our New England colleges writes: "I am distressed by the all too prevalent lack of deep religious convictions among the capital young men of my acquaintance. So few seem to have any guiding principle satisfactory even to themselves. So many seem to blind themselves to the fact that they are drifting even according to their own standards."

or for social reasons. But religion, as a real motive-power, is practically unknown to them. As far as "vital motivations" go, they cannot be called Christians at all.

The vague feeling in the Church that something was wrong here was converted into an unpalatable but undeniable fact by the religious inquiry made possible by the war. Thousands of average young men were assembled in military camps at home and abroad. The experiences and reports of chaplains leave no doubt as to the comparative ignorance of these men of the real meaning of the Christian religion.[17] To the vast majority, Christian morality was a system of negative commandments. The "men have absolutely no clear conception of the Christian religion. The existing ideas have a purely traditional basis with little working power in life." "The majority have not the foggiest notion of what Christianity is all about." "Belief in certain doctrines and the performance of certain rituals has been preached to them so long as Christianity that they cannot see beyond these and do not grasp how this is going to help them to live any better, or to make them any more ready to die. The big difficulty . . . is to get them to connect their ideals with their Christianity, if they have any. They do not see that Christ is the source of most of their ideals and they do not think that Christianity has any thing to say on points that really interest them."

These quotations, which might be multiplied indefinitely, indicate clear ignorance of a thoroughgoing conception of what the Christian religion is, and what it can do. How to set the true conception at work in the lives of the young men and women of our churches; how to get them to learn that Christ is not a dim historical figure of two thousand years ago, but the present Source of that spiritual power of which, like everyone else, they stand in the greatest need; how to have them acquire a fear of the Lord, that shall be literally the beginning of a real wisdom, and constrain them to "call things sins," "stick to the Ten Commandments" and avoid over-indulgence of the senses and the appetites; how they are to learn for themselves an obedience to a divine command which "is

[17] See "The Army and Religion," Macmillan Co., pp. 60 ff., 1919. "The Church and the Civilian Young Man," Atlantic Monthly, September, 1919.

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not arguable,"[18] and to be controlled in one's daily life by a fine sense of chivalrous loyalty to Christ—this is the real problem of religious teaching which confronts the Church in our modern world.

How is this work to be done? Without doubt, the answer to this question is no easy or offhand one. No program or method of itself will suffice. The first thing needed is that all who have to do with the religious education of our youth shall be impressed by its supreme importance.

Such education should begin in the home. More children probably have learned what the Christian way of life really is in the home than anywhere else. Yet the average American home is lamentably weak at this work. There never was more attention given to a child's body and a child's mind, and there never was less attention given to his morals and his religion. Carefully trained in all other respects, he has often been allowed to grow up religiously as he pleased. Many parents who are most anxious over adenoids and measles, are apparently not concerned in the least whether or not the real fear of God is being planted in a child's heart. Parents who devote hours to getting their children into the right schools and into the hands of the right kind of teachers never visit a Sunday School, never think of cooperating with a Sunday School teacher, do not give an hour, even on Sunday, to any kind of Bible or religious instruction of their children, and by absence from church themselves let their children understand how little they think of it.

Dean Hodges describes how the lack of this training works out in the life of a child who has lived without having learned from parents or nurses or teachers what independent moral living means. "Sometimes when a child thus nurtured grows into youth and comes, at last, into his inevitable independence and his own true will appears, his parents are much surprised. Thus and thus, he did when he could not help himself, but now he is revealed. The father and mother cannot understand how their son who was such a quiet and gentle lad at home, and whose marks for conduct were so good in the private school, can behave at college as if he had a devil. They are rather inclined to lay the blame upon the devil. But, the probable reason for

[18] Katharine Fullerton Gerould, Atlantic Monthly, August, 1920.

the difference is that the boy had only dependent goodness. The obedience which he showed was of their imposing, not of his choosing. They controlled him, but they did not educate him."[19]

To educate more children in real religion in the home is probably today our greatest responsibility. The Church must do its part there. To have parents send their children to Sunday School to "learn religion" when they themselves do not teach it at home, either orally or by the silent example of their own lives, is to ask too much of the Church. The teaching of one hour a week cannot make much impression upon a child who lives in a different atmosphere all his hundred other waking hours. At the bottom of the whole difficulty with respect to religious education will be found the present condition of American family life. This statement sufficiently indicates how difficult the situation is for the Church.

But to this problem, the Church must address itself. Out of the social chaos of our modern world, it must lay anew the foundations of family life, and create once more a place for religion in the home. Such a home has been described by Horace Bushnell, and its re-introduction into our modern world would solve for us some of our gravest problems: "We look in upon the Christian family where everything is on a footing of religion and we see them around their own quiet hearth and table, away from the great public world and its strifes, with a priest of their own to lead them. They are knit together in ties of love that make them one; even as they are fed and clothed out of the same fund, interested in the same possessions, partakers in the same successes and losses, suffering together in the same sorrows. . . . Into such a circle and scene it is that religion comes, each day, to obtain a grace of well-doing for the day. . . . It leads in the day as the dawn leads in the morning. It blends a heavenly gratitude with the joys of the table; it breathes a cheerful sense of God into all the works and tempers of the house; it softens the pillow for rest when the day is done. And so the religion of the house is life itself, the life of life. . . . Home and religion are kindred words; home because it is the seat of religion, religion because it is the sacred element of home."[20]

[19] "Training of Children in Religion," p. 3.
[20] Horace Bushnell, "Christian Nurture," pp. 349, 350.

The importance of the Church School as an agent of religious instruction is revealed by the fact that a large majority of the children of our land see at least the inside of these schools for several years of their lives, and that most of them obtain there the only explicit religious instruction which they receive. The parents of a large number of these children neither attend church themselves nor presumably give their children direct religious training. Of the parents who are connected with the churches, only a fraction directly interest themselves in the class work of the children and cooperate with them in learning the lessons of the Bible and the real meaning of religion. This lack of coordination and cooperation between the home and the Church School is one of the serious difficulties with which the Church has to contend in its work of the religious training of the children. All the more serious on this account becomes the responsibility of the Church School itself. Under the circumstances, really astonishing results are obtained. Without adequate support from the parents, limited to one hour a week for instruction, dependent for the most part upon a volunteer teaching force, and often without suitable rooms or conveniences for its work, the Church Schools do practically all of the work of direct religious instruction which is done for the Protestant children and youth of our land.

Admitting that much of this work is fragmentary and superficial; that many teachers have little qualification and less training for their task; that boys and girls often leave these schools who do not know much about their Bibles or the meaning of religion; nevertheless, there is a really vast amount of invaluable accomplishment to their credit. Even where the explicit teaching of religion has not been competent enough to give an adequate idea of what Christianity is, a deposit of faith has been left in the mind upon which, later, in its hour of need, it will be able to draw. An illustration of what we mean is given in one of Joseph Conrad's novels. In great peril of their lives, Heyst and Lena are walking through the forest. "I venture to think," says Heyst, "that God has nothing to do with it." "Oh, yes," answers Lena, "He's got to do with everything, every little thing. Nothing can happen. . . . " "Yes," he said hastily, "one of the two sparrows that can't be struck to the ground—you are thinking of that. Ah, you remember what you have been told

as a child on Sundays." "Yes, I do remember," answered Lena, "it was the only decent bit of a time I ever had."[21]

The fact is that "the Sunday School hour" is often the only "decent bit of a time," religiously speaking, that many a child has. That gives it tremendous significance. Years after, as in Lena's case, one "remembers," and this remembering is the sheet-anchor in the hour of testing. "It therefore appears that in spite of angry youthful revolts or mature sophistications, early religious training and especially repeated religious *acts* are likely to influence the whole future. Though all they meant to us seems dead or unreal, they have only retreated to the dark background of consciousness where they live on. The set which they have given our lives persists: we never get away from them. A church may often seem to lose her children, as human parents do: but in spite of themselves they retain her invisible seal, and are her children still."[22]

The Church at the present time is giving serious study to the problem of a really effectual system of religious education, and is facing with candour and with courage the many difficulties which that problem presents. A large and growing amount of literature testifies to this awakened conscience,[23] and everywhere, movements are on foot to improve the character of the religious teaching given by the churches. A graded curriculum, teachers' training

[21] "Victory," p. 403.

[22] By permission from Evelyn Underhill, op. cit., pp. 179, 180. Copyright, E. P. Dutton & Co.

[23] The following publications are only a few in this constantly expanding list:

G. A. Coe, "A Social Theory of Religious Education" (Scribner's).

G. H. Betts, "The New Program of Religious Education" (Abingdon).

H. F. Cope, "Religious Education in the Church" (Scribner's).

H. F. Cope, "The School in the Modern Church" (Doran).

H. F. Evans, "The Sunday School Building and Equipment" (University of Chicago Press).

H. Hartshorne, "Childhood and Character" (Pilgrim Press).

E. E. R. Mumford, "Dawn of Religion in the Mind of a Child" (Longmans).

G. H. Betts, "How to Teach Religion" (Abingdon).

H. F. Cope, "Religious Education in the Family" (University of Chicago Press).

W. B. Forbush, "Child Study and Child Training" (Scribner's).

classes, the children's part in the church service, pastors' instruction classes, and paid directors of religious education are all part of the newer program to make the teaching ministry of the Church more efficient. Considerable success has rewarded efforts made to supplement the Sunday teaching hour with week-day religious instruction, in which the children of all Protestant Churches in a community unite.[24] It will probably be necessary, however, to wait for a closer integration of Protestantism before Protestant children receive as thorough religious teaching as that given to Roman Catholic children in their parochial schools.

In the meantime, the college-trained young man and woman ought to look upon the work of religious instruction in the Church School as a peculiarly worthy use of his time and strength. In no other way can he do so much good, or invest his influence to better advantage. The cheap and common reference to a "Sunday School class" as an inescapable bit of church work awaiting the college student who returns to his home town and Church is terribly shortsighted. No finer contribution is made to American social and religious life today than that made by faithful teachers in our Church Schools. For a college student to decline such service because he no longer believes that the sun stood still at the command of Joshua or that the axe head swam on the river's surface at the word of Elisha, shows how little either the opportunity is understood or the way in which it should be used. There is no limit to the influence for good which a young man or woman may exercise in the religious training of a group of boys and girls. And the influence exerted by example, by showing in one's own life what real religion means, is not the least important element in it.

Indeed, so important is the contact between teacher and taught, that the substitution of paid teachers with more training but less personal interest and influence would be accompanied with serious loss. For it is probable that the boys and girls in our Sunday Schools have learned their best lessons, not from the lips but from the lives of their devoted teachers. Faith, after all, is not some-

[24] For a full description of these experiments, see H. F. Cope: "Week Day Religious Education," and "The Week Day Church School" (Doran), W. A. Squires: "The Week Day Church School" (Presbyterian Board of Publication), and Athearn: "The Malden Survey" (Doran).

thing that is taught by precept, so much as it is something that is communicated by example.

Along with better instruction in its church schools will be combined, in the teaching ministry of the Church, more explicit preaching. The Church must return to the work of teaching the essence of Christianity from the pulpit in concrete definite terms. We need more simple instructional sermons in which the plain principles of historical Christianity are set forth so that all the people can well understand them. The Roman Catholic Church has such preaching missions. The essence of Christianity is not a difficult and complex thing to apprehend and understand. If so many have failed so completely to grasp it, that can be only because it has not been set forth with sufficient clearness and definiteness in form and outline. Such pulpit teaching, if persistently practised, would go far to make people understand what the Christian religion really is.

Without doubt, we need more religious knowledge in the pews. Regular church-goers should be taught to know wherein Christianity differs from other religions; what the characteristic and underlying truths of Christianity are; they should know something about the organization of their own Church, and what it is trying to do in the world. If a man who knows nothing about the history and laws of his country is not a good citizen, a person can hardly be called a good Christian who is ignorant of the most elementary facts about his religion and his Church. These things can and should be so taught by the Church that regular attendants shall understand what they are.

One more aspect of this subject needs to be mentioned. Is the teaching of the Church, so far as its theological content and background are concerned, out of harmony with our modern world? Is there a rift between the thinking of the Church, as set forth in its creeds, and the thought of our day? Is there a latent antagonism between the presuppositions of historical Christianity and the intellectual assumptions on which all modern thinking is really based? In a word, do the creeds of the Church present an intellectual obstacle to Church loyalty? How can one who does not "accept" the creeds, be loyal to a Church whose teaching is based upon them?

Here, without doubt, is a real difficulty which presses more or less heavily upon some minds; but less heavily than is sometimes thought. Contrary to general opinion, intellectual difficulties seldom form a serious deterrent with most young men and women when the question is faced: "Shall I unite with the Church?" Their difficulties are usually personal and practical. None the less, the question of whether the theological teaching of the Church is out of harmony with modern thought does trouble many conscientious people.

At the present time the Church is engaged in a serious discussion of its fundamental beliefs, and of the ultimate ground or authority of its teaching. This discussion ought not to surprise or disturb one who is familiar with the history of Christian doctrine. In essence, it is a debate, as old as Christianity itself, between tradition on the one hand, and spiritual experience on the other, as authenticating the truths of the Christian religion. These two points of view are not mutually exclusive, and without doubt, each of them contains truth. The traditionalist, whether he bases religious authority on the Church, the Creed, or the Bible, is inclined to deprecate the vagaries possible in individual interpretation; and the modernist, in his turn, is likely to undervalue the worth of institutionalism, of continuity, and of every external witness to spiritual truths. The resurgence of the traditionalist point of view in our day is doubtless due in part to the absence of a positive religious teaching in both school and Church. In alarm against what they feel to be a fatal loss alike to religion and to life, the conservatives have boldly challenged both the scientific conceptions which they imagine undermine the teachings of the Bible, and the right of private interpretation which they declare invalidates the authority of the Creeds. Neither of these positions can be permanently maintained. On the other hand the modernist must recover the note of spiritual authority which has often been lacking, and must concede a far larger place to the historical bases of faith if peace is to come to what, for the moment, appears to be the divided mind of the Church.

Few believe that there is any positive insincerity in the teaching of the Church. Men do not doubt that preachers believe what they teach. Nor is there any widespread feeling that the Church in its teaching has not an open mind which fearlessly welcomes any advance of knowledge, or the spirit of free inquiry. There are exceptions, of course. Some churches do present the appearance of being intellectually hide-bound and impervious to fresh acces-

sions of knowledge. Yet the Protestant Church, as a whole, cautious and conservative as it is in its intellectual attitudes, does keep right on steadily and gradually, catching up with the advance of human knowledge. There is no real conflict today between science and religion. "No doubt there is unbelief still, but it is timid and hesitant and unaggressive, compared with the unbelief of even twenty years ago. It lives, where it lives at all, with low vitality in a prevailing mental atmosphere in which it can hardly draw its laboured breath. In his great novel, 'The Idiot,' Dostoyefsky makes Prince Muishkin say that the atheist when he talks about God, talks as one who is speaking 'outside the subject.' 'It has always struck me,' he says, 'both in speaking to such men and reading their books, that they do not seem really to be talking upon that subject at all, though on the surface, they may appear to do so.' Now, that is precisely how the modern thinking man has come to feel about the atheistic theory of life. It seems to him that to deny the existence of God is to speak outside the advertised subject. On the surface he seems to be dealing with his avowed theme, but in reality, he is dealing with a phantom, a grotesque idol of his own mind. What he really denies is that any such phantom as his own misconception of God can exist—and that is the best thing that can be done with it. His negative creed elicits practically no response at all in the modern mind. We have passed beyond the everlasting No. It may be we are still at the meeting place of two worlds—'the one dead, the other powerless to be born;" but at any rate, the world of mere negation and denial is dead. And that fact is full of hope.' "[25]

The real difficulty lies, however, with traditional Christian doctrine and dogma and not with the underlying presumptions of religion. Masses of people today who are not able to vindicate their doubts, continue skeptical concerning the reality of these doctrines and dogmas. "They find nothing in their experience or reading that joins on with these dogmas, and they have let them slip silently into the limbo of unreality."[26] They are impatient with the churches because they do not also let go of them. It irritates them that the Church does not rid itself of all

[25] P. Drummond Pringle, "The Outlook for the Church," Christian World Pulpit, May 4, 1922.
[26] Drake, op. cit., p. 74.

this unnecessary theological luggage; that it cannot or does not see how much more direct its appeal would be if it discarded its creed altogether, and instead, presented to men a simple, intelligible, working program to which all could give assent. It can only be due to the lack of moral courage, they infer, that this is not done. This only states crudely and loosely what many people feel.

Of course, a more intimate knowledge of Church history would go far to show those who feel like this that theology, instead of having nothing to do with social progress except to interfere with it, on the contrary has determined the moral history of our modern world.[27] Civilizations have been fashioned, history has been made, human affairs have been shaped by nothing more palpable, or seemingly more practical, than a metaphysical conception of God and of His relation to the world. The whole history of Europe in the Middle Ages is simply the expression of the Idea of God and of man which was implicit in the theology of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. The whole story of modern Europe is but the unfolding of the idea of the relation of man to God which found utterance in the teaching of Martin Luther.

The story of New England is conditioned by the idea of God held by our Pilgrim and Puritan forefathers. And it was of men, nourished by such a creed, that J. A. Froude (not a favourably prejudiced witness) wrote: "They attracted to themselves every man in Europe that hated a lie. They were crushed down but they rose again. They were splintered and torn, but no power could melt or break them. They abhorred as no body of men ever more abhorred all conscious mendacity, all impurity, all moral wrong of every kind so far as they could recognize it." It was such men as these that broke the back of tyranny in the state, and preserved personal and vital religion so that whatever at this moment exists in the

[27] From this point of view it seems strange that so helpful a writer as Ellwood in his "Reconstruction of Religion," should seem to minimize the social value of theology. Thus (p. 127), "Positive Christianity will subordinate theological and metaphysical questions; it will not stress the theological side of religion as the vital thing in the religious life, rather it will minimize it." "The world is rapidly finding out that it can get along very well with a much smaller minimum of theology than it formerly supposed, and perhaps it will soon discover that [this] may be still further reduced."

English-speaking race of accountability to God and of conscious fear of wrong was branded into men's hearts by the Calvinists. And the secret of their pertinacity, of their courage, of their indomitable will, was their belief in a sovereign God and in themselves as the agents of His will. It is of such stuff that heroes are made, and prophets; it is such men that "subdue kingdoms, obtain promises, and turn to flight the armies of the aliens."

The Creed of Calvinism, which put God first and taught that the chief end of man is to know Him and enjoy Him forever, lies at the foundation of all our modern liberties and laid the corner-stone of the American commonwealth. All permanent moral progress is founded on ideas. All moral purposes are based upon convictions. And our moral ideas and purposes are noble only in proportion to the nobility of the convictions on which they are based. Indeed, dogma, defined as a workable symbol of spiritual reality, is not an obstacle to social progress; rather it will be found in the long run to be essential to it.

This aspect of the social value of a doctrinal basis of faith has been finely put by Miss Scudder: "The modern churches are full of people who find dogma a clog to the free spirit, and who concern themselves with it as little as may be. Let them stay, and work for righteousness. But let them recognize the value of the other school, who apprehend Christianity less as ethical program than as spiritual power, and whose firm faith in Catholic doctrine is the well-spring of revolutionary conviction. There is intimate union, known to many who shrink from speaking of these arcana, between the Catholic faith at its fullest, and social radicalism at its boldest. Strength comes to these, not from such generalized religious ideals as can be shared by Buddhist or Jew, but from the definite Gospel as interpreted by the historic Church. They leave the religion of Humanity to those without the churches, for they know a better thing—the religion of Christ. Religious fervour, as the past proves, is attended by a vicious danger of spiritual egotism, unless it lead to social action. But plain Christians generally know today, as they have always known, that for them, social action is in the long run unmotived and perilous unless it draws from deep wells of religious faith."[28] Here, then, is one reason why the

[28] By permission "The Church and the Hour," pp. 68, 69. Copyright by E. P. Dutton & Co.

EVANGELICAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Church does not make an "ethical program" a substitute for its great underlying theologies.

Another reason follows as a corollary from what has already been said. The question may fairly be asked whether a good deal of the present-day restlessness in the sphere of morals is not due to the absence of an underlying doctrine of conduct; whether doctrine and duty, after all, have not something to do with each other. Many years ago a significant address was delivered by E. Benjamin Andrews, then President of Brown University, upon the "obscuration of culture." What he meant by this, he explained, was not the decay of good manners, nor the increase of a cheap dilettanteism in literature or art; he did not mean that people in society today had fewer scraps of Latin at their command; he did not mean the obsolescence of gentlemanly or ladylike accomplishments: he meant something profounder. He meant by culture what Emerson or Lowell or Arnold understood by it: "the well-balanced mind that walks serenely under standards which have been tried and found good,"—a definition which led Matthew Arnold, in one of his most thoughtful essays, to make anarchy and not vulgarity the antithesis of culture. And, in that sense, he had a right to say that culture is becoming obscured and obsolete.

What impresses one, in the collective and in the personal life of our time, is the way that the most elementary principles are often called into question. And the present shiftiness, the prevailing absence of firm conviction, indicates "a cast of mind to which all fixed standards are foreign and all discipline is abhorrent." There seems no longer to be any real standard in morals, any fixed criterion of right and wrong. There are no orbits in our moral astronomy, no steady revolving about a centre in a dependable, undeviating course. Trustworthy notions of right and wrong have become out-of-date; to the question, Is this right or wrong, the almost invariable answer is, That depends. The sacredest notions of personal responsibility are pulled up by the roots daily and examined, to see if they are really worth while. Morals have become largely a matter of convenience, of convention. The good old word "obedience" has fallen into total disrepute, and the less harsh and more pleasing word "convenience" has taken its place. There is anarchy in our modern moral world as truly as there was anarchy in the political world in

the time of Eli when every man did what was right in his own eyes and there was no open vision of God.

Here is where doctrine comes in. Doubtless, our fathers held a stern and limited conception of God. But their idea of God seems of incomparable dignity and worth compared to "the truly singular and scanty remnant of a truly spiritual apparel with which many a man today is content to clothe his naked human soul." Doubtless, our fathers held to a stern and repulsive view of hell; but it sounds almost noble compared to the smiling and supercilious serenity of many a butterfly spirit of today whose sense of an eternal accountability is not strong enough to turn them aside from even a moment's pleasure or the loss of a single luxury. Better far the iron creed of our fathers than a creed one holds so lightly that he will not even try to live it, to say nothing of going to the stake for it. There is no remedy for the social unrest and easy-going spirit of the times short of a reintroduction in the social and personal life of the doctrine of the sovereignty of God and the conception of human life as the instrument and agent of His will.

Most men realize, also, apart from the ethical results of a creedless faith, that they need the supernatural elements of religion to sustain them in their daily living. A so-called liberalized religion which trims away all that which is not immediately verifiable from the standpoint of pure reason and makes the smallest possible demand on "faith," somehow fails to satisfy the human heart. Most people are quite willing to take a religion whose concepts are above their heads, provided only that its power reaches below the level of their external lives. They do not want a teaching which is contrary to their reason, but they are quite willing to admit one that is beyond it. Above all, they want one that will do the work of life, that will lift its burdens, solve its problems. And men, as a whole, have discovered that the churches which proclaim a way of life that is founded on the great doctrines of historical Christianity are the churches which hold out a faith that is adequate to men's needs.

Supernaturalism in religion is not foreign to the modern mind; not if it is a supernaturalism which substitutes for miraculous deeds, or events, the very real Presence of God as the Great Fact of life; the actual finding of the Heart of God in the Person of Jesus Christ; the real sense of

the Spirit of God in their lives. If men are to choose between a faith which may seem intellectually less comprehensible but which practically proves more efficient, and a faith which seems more easily understood by the mind but which falls short of meeting the whole emergency of their lives, they will not hesitate. As a matter of fact, they have not hesitated. It is not today the churches with the shortest creeds which have the largest congregations. It is quite the other way. And the reason is plain: there is latent moral and spiritual power behind these ancient symbols for which no substitute has been found or can be found.

One does not need to live very long in order to discover that reformation in morals has never been achieved by mere directions to be good, but has always been the result of an enthusiasm for some City of God, or for some supereminent Person. Many men who have rejected the whole supernatural element in faith on intellectual grounds have found that in moments of trial and temptation their liberalized theology has failed to see them through. What any one wants in one's religion is precisely the capacity to hold and sustain him in the critical moments of his experience. That is what religion is for. And it has been proved as often as it has been put to the test that the faith of which the historic creeds are the outward symbol, is all-sufficing.

Two thousand years of spiritual experience have established, beyond peradventure, that a Gospel which has within it not only the Fatherhood of God, but also the Saviourhood of Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost, is the most efficient Gospel of which the world has any knowledge. It stands this test of serviceableness as does no other Gospel. It will really get more done; it will make better men; it will create more purity of soul; it will produce more character of the highest grade than any other Gospel known to men. The fact is that when it comes to getting done the vast moral work in the world that needs to be done—not for the scholar in his study, not for the critic in his easy-chair, not for the student with his books: but for the man in the hour of his temptation, for the woman in the time of her peril, for the soul in the loneliness of its grief, for the sinner in the agony of his remorse—only one Gospel is equal to the task.

Thus, no contradiction can be shown between the historic doctrines of the Church and the experiences of our modern world. On the contrary, it can be affirmed with conviction that the two are in fundamental and actual agreement. The test of trial under fire has demonstrated their efficacy and their validity as aids to daily living. "Visio Dei vita hominis," said the monk of old. We have revolted against the system that produced him, but we have come to believe what he said. Man's life is truly his vision of God. The faith that incarnates the uttermost of that vision is the faith that will ultimately appear most rational and real. The more the modern world feels its need of God, the more God the world feels that it needs, the more it will turn in gratitude to the Christianity of the New Testament as enshrined in the historic creeds, for it is the grandest gift of God to men which the world has ever known.

The question remains, however: How are the creeds to be understood, and how are they to be used? The intellectual difficulty which many feel at this point is largely removed if one comes to look upon these historic statements of faith, not but as the definition of a philosophy, but as the expression of a Life which is very different. In a word, substitute the vital for the scholastic conception of Christian doctrine, and difficulties will largely vanish. Instead of taking the creeds as hard-and-fast statements, the faith, intellectually as binding upon the modern mind and in the very sense given to them by the mediæval mind, one will look inside the vessel of language in which they have come down to us to the victorious principles of living within them. "In the definition of philosophy we must change our forms of expression as often as we change our philosophy. But in expressing a Life, we may rightly use as our own, expressions which past ages have framed to express a Life which was theirs as well as it is ours.

"If [the Apostles'] Creed were the definition of a philosophy, one might perhaps condemn one who denied the philosophy but continued the phraseology. But since it is the expression of a Life, then no one truly rejects this Creed unless he disowns the Life of which it is perhaps an archaic but certainly a beautiful and a sacred expression. I [therefore] join," Lyman Abbott has written, "in reciting the Apostles' Creed without hesitation. In the cathedral service, this Creed is sung, not

recited, and this fact justifies my understanding that the Church regards this recital as an act of worship, not as a definition of theology. As in all acts of worship, as in all emotional utterances, the phrases are of necessity inexact, and they interpret differing, though not inconsistent, conditions of thought and feeling in different worshippers. Worship is feeling, and feeling can never be accurately defined."[29]

The real contrast in our day is not between a theology that is old and a theology that is new, but between a theology that is interpreted in sheer unalterable literalness and is made binding in the exact form in which it has come down to us by tradition; and a theology which is conceived as the outward expression of inward and living reality the form and interpretation of which must necessarily alter according to the ruling ideas of each successive generation. It is against the former of these two attitudes alone that the modern mind rebels. It does not revolt against belief that the Bible is uniquely inspired, but only against the idea of a literal and verbal and equal inspiration of all parts of the Bible. It does not rebel against the miraculous element in the Bible, but only against the notion that to question any part of it is to deny the whole of it. It does not reject the idea of the Atonement, but neither does it identify the Truth of the Cross with any one of the mediæval interpretations of it. It gladly admits the unique moral splendour of the Person of Christ, who reproduces for us the Heart of God, presents to us in visible form the moral character of God, so that we can be sure that when we deal with Christ we are having to do with God,—but it does not like to have almost legally phrased definitions in these matters made strictly binding. It prefers to find its deepest "proof" of the divine in Christ in the sphere of moral recognition. In a word,

[30] So Drake, op. cit., p. 85, "By retaining this mode of language, then, we can meet with those who are religious, but not scientific, and express our common religious experience in common terms. If, on the other hand, we discard these familiar forms and vehicles of our religious life, we can hardly help losing something also of the vividness and unction with which we once expressed our spiritual experience and aspiration. The hallowed phrases root deep in our hearts; and so, while we cannot accept them as literal statements of fact, we may be content to use them, with others, as a symbolic expression of what is deeply vital and eternally true."

it is not to the historic beliefs of the Church that the modern mind objects, but only to hard-and-fast subscription to the outward and traditional expression of them.

At this point, reference is in order to an encouraging fact which ought to remove the last intellectual scruple that any sincere mind may feel in considering his relation to the Church—creed subscription is no longer a test of church membership. That day has passed for most American churches, and must soon pass for all. The creed-test, as it was called, was a New England innovation devised at a time when the churches were much concerned about the orthodoxy of their members.

Times have changed and today it is generally understood that the real test of Christian discipleship is not the test of theological opinion, but the test of the moral motive and attitude of one's life. It is not the test of the mind so much as it is the test of the will. To be willing to walk in Christ's way of sacrifice and service, literally to take up one's cross and follow Him, this is the qualification of Church membership for which the churches are looking today. It is not the assent to a creed, but the consent to a Life which admits to Christian fellowship. The teaching of the Church today need bar no one from church membership. It may raise questions with which the mind will continue to deal. But the real issue involved in its teaching is a solemn alternative to which the will alone must return the answer: "Behold I set before you this day life and good, death and evil."[30] "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve."[31] "No man can serve two masters; ye cannot serve God and Mammon."[32] "He that is not for me is against me."[33] "If any man will serve me, let him follow me."[34] The teaching of the Church at present, therefore, is as old as the Bible and as new as today. No intellectual difficulties can befog the moral choice which it sets before every human life.

[30] Deut. 30:15.
[31] Josh. 24:15.
[32] St. Matt. 6:24.
[33] St. Matt. 12:30.
[34] St. John 12:26.

Chapter VII

THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH

The critical importance of the character of the worship offered by the Church can hardly be exaggerated. It is in this matter that many people find themselves least ready to compromise when they seek to relate themselves to the Church. It cannot be denied, that is, that there is a considerable number of people in every community who hold aloof from the Church not because they do not want to worship, but because they do. Of course, this states the matter bluntly and at its worst. For other multitudes of people, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, their churches are shrines, where their souls meet with God, where they find "grace to help in time of need." The worshipping instincts of their hearts find there deep and constant satisfaction. Yet the number of exceptions is distressing, and "all who have insight may read many a tragedy of personal experience: many a passionate protest against unsympathetic dogmatism, sectarian narrowness, preaching that lacked a vision of the eternal, and a service of worship that has failed to inspire."[1] Some members of this group find nature worship a substitute for church worship: the adoration of the outer world for the ancient way of the Church. Others substitute ethics for worship. They proclaim their delight in a more spacious non-religious ethic, freed from the old pious restrictions upon conduct, and voice their satisfaction with a "culture absolved from the limitations of traditional belief," *i.e.*, pure morals unrestricted by ancient dogma. Others turn to menticulture or Eastern theosophy. With still others, religion is a synonym for humanitarian enthusiasm. Passion for justice, brotherhood, righteousness, equality,—this seems to untold numbers to be the Alpha and Omega of religion and they fairly "boast of their detachment from what is called

[1] Charles Cuthbert Hall, "The Universal Elements of the Christian Religion," pp. 198, 199.

the sounding brass of orthodoxy and the tinkling cymbal of ritualism."

There is only one method by which the Church can win back these multitudes and then hold their affection and loyalty. It must seek, above all else, to satisfy, as completely as possible, the worshipping instinct of the human heart.

The burning reality of this human impulse is not open to doubt. Voluminous evidence supplied by the history of religions is witness to the fact that the impulse which prompts man to the worship of Omnipotence is universal and ineradicable. The questioning mind, the wondering heart, the suffering soul can find satisfaction in the contemplation and adoration of God alone. However the human mind may advance in wisdom, the universe will never become so well known and cheapened as to fail to inspire awe; nor will human life ever become so materialized that moral obligations and spiritual aspirations will cease to captivate us. To solemnize and to quicken human life in all of its relationships with the consciousness of the Presence of God, and to lift it on the wings of hope and love, this is the peculiar ministry of the Church.

All poetry, said Browning, is occupied with the problem of putting the Infinite into the finite. That also is the problem of all worship. Worship may be defined as John Wilhelm Rowntree once defined prayer: "The reverent concentration of the whole inner being upon its supreme ideal, that movement of the soul which leads it into the light of love and the presence of the righteous Father."[2] Where, therefore, true worship has taken place, a mighty feat has been accomplished. Worship is a devotional affirmation of faith in God, the public testimony of the body of worshippers that they know that God is, and that a man can establish relationships with Him. It is actual contact with the Father of our spirits. The postulate of worship, that the human soul may feel after and discover God, is as rational as the postulate of science that there is an intelligible order in nature which the human reason can feel after and discover. The conviction of the heart that its yearning for holiness and its plea

[2] Charles Cuthbert Hall, "Christian Worship," p. 22, quotes Professor Sohm: "The aim of Divine worship and its crowning glory is the feeling of the immediate omnipresence of the Divine." . . .

for forgiveness really wins response from the Infinite Heart is no more unreasonable than the conviction of the scientist that the peculiar line in the spectrum reports the presence of oxygen in the star millions of miles distant. Thus when a human soul has truly worshipped, it has "proved," in the only way that it needs to prove, and possibly in the only way it can prove, that God is, and that "He is a rewarder of them who seek after Him."[3] "Philosophy has wrestled with the affirmation that God is; science cannot legitimately consider it; history can merely suggest it by recording the many who have found courage and happiness in believing it; worship alone provides the key which opens the door and reveals that 'the Lord is nigh.'"[4] If anyone even partially believes these words, the significance for him of worship is seen at once. It changes his whole attitude of life and sorrow and temptation and death. It has a transfiguring value. It has made common men heroes; it has healed the broken reed and inflamed the smoking flax. It is truly the beginning of all life that proves itself in any sense superior to circumstance and the lord of its destiny.

The mission of the Church is to originate and perfect a form of service in which worship in this sense and definition of it can come into its own. That church truly does its work which provides an hour of real worship, when there have been put into active operation spiritual forces that bear the test of being valid and serviceable aids to daily living. We may be sure that a true hour of worship summons spiritual and holy influences which really radiate; that soothe, uplift, enlighten the hearts and souls of those who worship. If men and women go away feeling that strength has been received, though their burdens have not been removed, with which to bear them; that they have been shamed at their ingratitude, indifferent, pulseless kind of amiability, which they know only to be another name for moral cowardice, their attitude of easy fatalism toward their own besetting sins, and an equal uncharitableness toward those of others; if the hour of worship stirs within them new yearnings, new desires, fresh hopes and consecrated enthusiasms,—then the Christian Church at the moment and hour that it has done this thing for them has accomplished the purpose of its

[3] Hebrews, 11:6.
[4] James Gibb, M. A., Christian World Pulpit.

existence. It has comforted the comfortless, breathed hope into the hopeless; it has taken the deadness away and reproduced a living will; it has pierced shame and shamed cowardice; it has awakened the sense of guilt and pronounced its pardon; it has gathered the multitudes, hungry for something deeper than bread, and it has sent them away

> "Carrying music in their heart
> Through dusky lanes and wrangling mart,
> Plying their daily task with busier feet
> Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."

The truly worshipping Church need not fear for its future. For in their heart of hearts men know that they need the voice of God, and a well-authenticated message from it is soon recognized by them and they are willing to listen to it. There is no need to take issue with the man who says that he can worship at home, or in the woods, or even on the golf course. It might be interesting to find out whether or not he does. It might not be out of place to suggest, in the event that he does, it is likely that either he or his parents learned to worship somewhere else. But it is enough to point out that solitary worship, even when it is most real, is no substitute for common worship. For true worship is never isolated. In George Eliot's words: "One wants a temple beside the outdoor temple—a place where human beings do not ramble apart but meet with a common impulse. . . . There is room yet for a witness of that inward life, which draws out nourishment from the hidden love of God, and bears rich fruit in holy fellowship blessed by the unity of a common consciousness that God, the world and humanity are one." Experience coincides with scripture that the Divine Presence is realized most surely in common worship. Whoever has caught, for however brief an instant, the thrill of common communion with God, during the uplift, as of unseen wings, that bears a truly worshipful congregation into the wide spaces of the Eternal, can never lose the conviction that he has found in this experience the native and inalienable meadow-land of the soul.

That the real opportunity of the Church lies in the provision of common worship which bears the test of reality and efficacy seems so clear that it appears little less than extraordinary that Protestant churches have so often

ignored or neglected it. When one looks over the organized life of many of our churches, they appear to be equipped to render every other form of service except the one which it is their unique mission to perform. Many churches study how to conduct themselves so as to create the impression that they are a social democracy; they throw themselves into interesting experiments in social service; often they provide the means of helpful æsthetic enjoyment; they endeavour to satisfy men's intellectual demands. Yet they fail to "put the Infinite into the finite"; little worship takes place in them; the word of pardon and of power for which the Church was made too seldom reaches its mark; they do not supply the Bread of Life without which, as men have learned by bitter experience, they cannot live. In them, the life of God simply is not brought to bear upon the life of man.

No more pressing and urgent necessity, therefore, rests upon the Church than to set in the foreground of her endeavour a purpose to recover the means of satisfying the worshipping instinct of the human heart. In order to be successful, it must resolve to hold single-mindedly to this quest, and not seek to "attract" attention and attendance by appeals to other and more superficial interest and motives. It is a great mistake into which many churches have fallen, in the hope of securing a following by other means, to abandon the high vantage-ground which the Church ought steadily to occupy. It results always in a serious loss of dignity and prestige.

Long ago, in speaking to the churches, Canon Barnett pointed out that they would probably commend themselves better to the workingmen of East London if they took less pains to be attractive. The same holds true today of people of all sorts and conditions as well as workingmen. The people who flock to the popular entertainments and respond to the sensational advertisements put out by some churches probably think of these churches as the Church ought not really to be thought about. We hardly realize how far Protestantism has been weakened by the contempt it shows in practice for the principle that the Church exists primarily to be a centre of worship. An indication of this weakness is seen in the way in which many people today feel that they have a right to use a church service as a means of extending their social acquaintance. Some years ago a popular American journal reported the expe-

riences of a certain woman who went from one church to another and made note of the amount of personal attention that she received on entering and leaving. The underlying assumption of the experiment was that a stranger had a right to expect social attention and that no church was doing its duty which failed to extend it. The general concurrence of opinion on the part of its readers that this correspondent was justified in her expectation and, therefore, in her criticism of the Church, only serves to illustrate the plight into which our Protestant churches have fallen.

In comment upon this incident, the Outlook said: "The conception of the Church service as an occasion for promoting the interchange of social courtesies among its members, and for extending them to others, places on a low level, if it does not altogether destroy, the motive of church attendance. . . . It is the weakness of American Protestantism that this 'club' conception of the Church prevails. . . . No one would think of attempting to take the temperature of Roman Catholic churches by applying to them a journalistic thermometer. In the Roman Catholic Church no one would expect personal attention unless she had made her wants known to the priest or to some one who could take her to the priest. . . . If she had gone to the church to hear the truth . . . and to worship God, she would not have been concerned as to how she was received by its members. Protestantism has weakened itself and has cast away the dignity of the Church . . . by bidding for patronage. If the churches will but say, 'Those who enter here for worship need expect no social attentions, for this is the place where man draws near to God and God draws near to man,' more would attend churches than now. . . . If the churches were to abandon altogether their position as religious clubs founded primarily for the intellectual and social entertainment of their own members, . . . they would not be open to such criticism as their present position invites. Then if they fulfilled their mission to give to the community the opportunity and privilege of hearing the truth, and of worshipping the Eternal, they would receive the gratitude of men, who would look for nothing more."[6]

Without doubt, the Church should cultivate the idea of fellowship and should become a real brotherhood; but

[6] The Outlook.

little of any worth in the way of fellowship and brotherhood can be expected as the outcome of such an unpromising beginning as this attempted use of it as a social step-ladder. If the reason men stay away from chuch be because they do not want to worship, the Church had better contrive to endure their absence than to become anything else and less than a place of worship in order to attract them. The Church should never forget that its business is to strike the spiritual note clearly and strongly and keep the spiritual level high. Some day the tide will turn and men will look to the Church to give them what today they refuse to accept from it.

In the next place, the Church, jealous to maintain itself as a centre of worship, will have regard for its church buildings.[7] It goes without saying that one can more truly worship in all likelihood if one have a truly worshipful place in which to do so. Yet church buildings seem often to be erected with regard to every other end than that of promoting the sense of worship. They live up to the name "auditorium" which is often given to them. The idea of utility is emphasized. Can the people see the preacher? Will the "auditorium" make a good forum centre? Will it admit of motion pictures? Hence many of our newer churches "look like theatres inside and out." Not long ago, a conference took place between an architect and a church building committee. The question up for settlement was whether the church interior should have straight or converging aisles; a flat or a sloping floor. Finally, the architect said to the committee: "Gentlemen, it all depends on what you want. If you want an auditorium, then by all means a sloping floor and semicircular seats. But if you want a church, you want straight aisles and pews." And the committee told the architect that they wanted an auditorium. Apparently congregations agree with them, for too many of our church buildings are assembly rooms rather than shrines.

The attempt to separate religion from the normal human love for beauty is akin to the attempt to create for mankind a rational, simplified theological diet freed from all sense of mystery and all suggestion of the supernatural.[8]

[7] For a fine discussion of this and kindred subjects see "Religion and Art," by Von Ogden Vogt.

[8] "Dietarians, Theologians and Stained Glass," The Outlook.

The one insuperable difficulty with either proposition is that our souls happen not to have been built in a manner to make the project feasible. Our church buildings do suggest a freedom of thought and a liberty of belief which might have been impossible under "a continuously overmastering tyranny of the Gothic tradition." On the other hand, it is time we learned that the church building is not fulfilling the highest possibilities of its existence if it fails to express in some way that spirit of faith of which it is the earthly habitation, no matter how large the seating capacity of its huge auditorium. "It must present to the eye both the authority of the past and the aspiration of the future." Our churches would commend themselves to a large number of unchurched people if the new structures erected were temples that raised the hearts of the people instinctively to God. The idea is slowly taking root. If so-called Church Building Societies, which aid small churches to erect church buildings, would employ competent ecclesiastical architects to draw their plans, it would do more to promote church life in America than is often realized.

Akin to the proper church building is the proper use of the sanctuary in that building. A false feeling of economy often rebels at the use of the sanctuary for worship only on one or two days in the week, leaving it idle for the rest of the time. Nevertheless, there can be no greater waste than to destroy the "feeling" that people may have for the sanctuary, by its use for stereopticon entertainments, concerts or secular lectures. This "feeling" is one of the most potent influences which the Church possesses. And it is contrary to all experience to expect people to assemble on Sunday in a room used for all kinds of secular entertainment, and be wrapped in the same atmosphere of awe and reverence which the worshipper experiences in a place reserved for common prayer and worship. A Church truly bent on promoting the ideal of worship will rigidly exclude from the sanctuary everything that does not belong to worship. What may look like loss is really solid gain.

The service of worship, itself, must be subjected to the test of its ability to awaken the deepest religious sentiments and motives. It is not altogether a question of the "order" of the service, although this means much. First

of all, there must be early proof upon the part of the one whose chief duty it is to conduct the service of worship that he has a sound conception of the meaning of his office. For nothing is clearer than that many of the clergy treat this whole matter with easy indifference. The careless, shiftless way in which some ministers conduct the service of worship is a sheer disgrace to their profession and a profound irreverence towards God. Such a minister lounges in his seat. While choir or congregation are singing, he is busy with his notes or announcements. Outside the church, he talks like an ordinary human being. But in it, he affects a voice which has little resemblance to the "vox humana": like "the curate described by Carlyle, who read with the moaning 'hoo hoo' of predetermined pathos." He reads the Bible as if it meant little to him and was not intended to mean any more to any one else. His prayers do not make it apparent that they are addressed to any one either in Heaven or on earth. He treats the whole service as if it were something to be got out of the way in order to arrive at the sermon. But when they get the sermon, the congregation wonders why he was so anxious to reach it.

This is not exaggeration. It actually happens in many a church today and does irreparable damage.

Church-going people, it has well been said, whether steady or transient, come to church with far more of reverence and gravity than we often give them credit for. And a too familiar method of conducting a service or preaching a sermon; undignified attitude or phraseology; crude and even vulgar ways of speech; violations of good taste and propriety; habits of egotism and rough disregard for the finest sensibilities,—all these hurt and wound and make a congregation indignant when it is really bent on worship. It is experiences of this sort in what some love to call "our free" but what they might often more truly call "our free-and-easy" churches which drive people from them in search of a church which takes care that its service shall always be conducted with dignity and decorum. It may be said of the Episcopal Church that the Prayer Book precludes frivolity and flippancy, at least, and that this safeguard is not the least of its virtues. A minister, dependent upon himself, needs to use all the greater care to get rid of every slipshod phrase, every jarring note, every infelicitous expression, every blemish

of voice or manner. He is a priest of Almighty God though he stand in the plainest pulpit in the land, and he should wear at least the garment of pure heart and lips.

All the blame in this matter can not be laid at the minister's door. Part of it is the fault of the system which produced him. As long as the churches continue to receive into the ministry recruits as ill-prepared men as many graduates of Bible Training schools and correspondence courses, so long can they expect these ministers to be ignorant of the theory and incompetent in the practice of public worship—one of the most difficult problems with which the parish minister has to deal. From this point of view, it is not too much to speak of "the collapse of worship in Protestant communities."[9] Even the theological seminaries have not been training their men as they should in this important aspect of their work.

Many a minister in the so-called "non-liturgical" churches begins his work better instructed in many forms of the task which lies before him than he is in the principles underlying the conduct of worship. "Evidence of the collapse of worship lies in the naïve efforts to reinstate it. 'Programs' are published, which embody no intelligible self-verifying procedure. 'Anthems' are inserted in them, here and there, without any sense of fitness for the day or of the psychology of worship. The psalms are repeated and the Gloria is sung while the congregation is seated. The Bible is read in brief haphazard selections, without the guidance of any lectionary. The most bizarre announcements are dropped into the middle of the service, which all through bears no trace of orderly development or of personal effort to reach the religious will through the feeling and imagination." All over the land, the people are suffering from church services conducted in this way.

That there are historic reasons for this neglect or ignorance of the element of worship must be taken into account. Real grievances led the Puritans to their revolt against a form of worship from which they felt the spirit had fled. They made their protest and registered their convictions. In doing so, inevitably they swung to the opposite extreme, magnified the sermon and neglected the worship. What ought to be recognized today, and it ought not to be difficult at this long distance of time to do it,

[9] Albert Parker Fitch, "Preaching and Paganism," p. 194.

is that the issue which confronted the Puritans no longer confronts the Church. What is now needed and perfectly feasible is a synthesis of form and spirit, of symbolism and reason, of sermon and worship in the life of the Church. In the exact degree in which this is done, will the worship of the Church make its broadest appeal in our modern world. It is true that form without spirit is dead. It is also true that spirit without form is, under human conditions, impossible of capture.

The only question worth discussing is: What is the proper form for the spirit of worship to wear? Is there any sound reason, Dr. Huntington once asked, for exempting religion from the universal principle of form? Shall form attend every single step a man takes, and then suddenly be expected to retire the moment we cross the threshold of the sanctuary? To rule out form from the observances of the holy place is to rule it out everywhere. That would mean a preference for chaos over cosmos. For, of chaos alone, it is written that it was "without form." The recovery of a true form of worship without any loss of a true spirit of worship would remove one of the gravest causes for the decline of many churches today.

Too many churches, also, are intellectually lop-sided. They lack historical perspective, any bond of union with the past; they lack the mystical temper which is of the very essence of religion and which has sent multitudes who miss it wandering in search of it in the fields of theosophy and oriental mysticism. Why is it, Dr. Orchard has asked, that the churches "have not only divided the Body of Christ, but have also divided the soul of man? If one sets out in this modern world to find a church which shall provide real spiritual fellowship, one soon discovers that in every church that exists we can have freedom *or* authority, mysticism *or* rationalism, the supernatural *or* the natural, liturgical *or* free prayer, . . . a worship dominated by awe *or* a public meeting; whereas, a human being wants all these things at one time or another. But no, I must take my choice. If I have one, I cannot have the other. I must join a 'denomination' which feeds only half my nature and denies that the other exists, find my fellowship with people that have only one eye, make the rest of my spiritual pilgrimage on one

leg."[10] Who can doubt what the other half-nature, the other eye, the other leg, really is in our intellectualized, rational, modernized churches and church services?

A recovery of this mystical temper and appeal, the suggestion in architecture, service, praise and prayer of those supernatural elements of revealed truth which lay hold of the heart and life directly through the imagination and the emotion is one of the most urgent necessities of Protestantism today. For the religious life needs nurture in the imaginative as well as in the rationalizing and practical areas of human experience. Protestantism errs when it lays exclusive emphasis upon intelligence, and Protestant church services do not do the work that needs to be done when they are exclusively informative and scarcely inspirational at all. For "the spiritual life is not so much a proposition to be proved as a power to be appropriated."[11]

The place which the sermon occupies, and ought to occupy, in a Church service has been much discussed of late. Reference was made to the subject in the previous chapter. Without doubt, the sermon has become too much the whole service in many churches. Its exaggerated importance has been a source of weakness rather than of strength. The secondary place given to the service, in comparison with the primary importance ascribed to the sermon, was apparent even in Bacon's day. And while he applauded the insistence of the Puritans that the clergy should be more than "dumb dogs," he reminded them that "preaching may be magnified and extolled superstitiously—as if the whole body of God's worship should be turned into an ear." What is wanted is a "body of worship" in which the "ear" is appealed to no more prominently than it should be.

The Church will never be what it ought to be, or do all it ought to do for men, until the people look upon it primarily and fundamentally as a place of worship. Congregations of all Protestant churches might well begin to train themselves in church-going for other purposes than to "hear" a sermon. The exaggeration of the sermon also has put an unbearable burden on the ministry. The knowledge that the sermon is the one thing that the people are coming for, tempts the minister to put all his time and strength into it to the neglect of the other elements

[10] W. E. Orchard, "The Outlook for Religion," p. 264.
[11] A. P. Fitch, ibid., p. 186.

of the church service. Also, preachers are drawn into advertising their sermon topics and, to catch the eye of the crowd, they invent sensational subjects, all of which lowers the whole life and appeal of the Church. The work of the Church simply cannot be done in this way. For a church which does not emphasize worship, "is trying to build the structure of a spiritual society with the corner-stone left out."[12]

But neither will it do to emphasize the worship and neglect the sermon. We are not forced to choose whether the Church shall be liturgical or homiletical. Worship and sermon ought never be set face to face, the one against the other, as if worship were one thing and sermon another. We shall never find our way to a proper integration of these two factors except on the basis that the true worship of the Church shall lead up to and eventuate in a sermon, provided it is the kind of sermon that lives and moves and has its being in the spirit of the worship. Intellectual power *may* be directed to the production of spiritual life. The understanding *may* be used to move the human heart. When the sermon stands out by itself distinct and almost unrelated to the service of worship which has preceded it, restricted in its appeal to people's intellectual curiosity and out of touch with the deepest motives of their lives,—then the sermon is a menace.

In sharp contrast, a sermon described by Julia Ward Howe is of the very nature of worship:

"I have heard a true word of God today from Frederick Hedge: a sermon on Love as the true bond of society, which lifted my weak soul as on the wings of a cherub. The immortal truth easily lost sight of in our every-day weakness and passion stood out so clear that I felt their healing power as if Christ Himself had stood and touched my blinded eyes with His divine finger. So be it always."[13] Of such a sermon it cannot be said that when it began, it was a signal that worship was over, and the worshipping congregation might resolve itself into an "audience." The sermon finds its true place in the Christian cultus when both congregation and preacher practice in their hearing and speaking the principle that preaching is a sacramental element in worship: that "worship has a word to utter,

[12] A. P. Fitch, ibid., p. 188.

[13] "Julia Ward Howe," by Laura E. Richard and Maud Howe Elliott, 1915, Vol. I, p. 290.

a truth to witness to and unfold in a growing experience. . . . For the Christian faith is two things, it is truth and life, and these can never be separated. From heart to heart and from mind to mind it must spread: one man's experience becoming another man's inspiration, and preaching is this passing over from one heart and mind to another, the influence of a soul suffused with the truth of the evangel."[14]

It has often been noted that the Church which magnifies the devotion which centres in the Lord's Supper has less reason to complain of public indifference than one which relies almost exclusively on the drawing power of the pulpit. This fact alone serves sufficiently well to indicate the direction in which the heart of this generation—like every other—is sure to turn. The human soul will always need and therefore will most surely turn at some hour of its experience to a Church which knows how to offer it the gift of God in the Sacrament. No historian of the Early Church fails to ascribe much of its stability and power to the constant celebration of the Communion. It was the sacrament which held together with fibres of flesh and blood those little groups of persecuted Christians which the sword of Nero or of Trajan could not sever. Protestantism needs to revive and to lay added emphasis upon the sacramental in the life of the Church. It may be questioned whether the Reformation rightly settled the relation between the sermon and the Eucharist in the constitution of the Christian cultus. As over against the practice of the Roman Church at the time of the Reformation there was doubtless then justification for the Reformed view.

Worthy of careful attention, even by those who are very sure that the emphasis of other elements at the expense of the Eucharist and its accompanying services was right and proper at the time of the Reformation, is the question whether it is right and proper now? It is a contradiction of the order of worship of the primitive Church as far as we know anything of it. My own personal view is that in place of prevalent thought and practice that the Lord's Supper is a commemorative rite which the individual can pass by without spiritual loss, we need to elevate not only the rite itself but our conception of it. Intellectual belief and religious emotion both have their

[14] Thomas Yates, Christian World Pulpit, March 27, 1918.

place in the normal religious life. But the mystery, the awe, the indefinite power of the Sacrament claim a sphere all their own. In its presence, "the most emancipated free-thinker instinctively bows his head, if not his soul." A long step will have been taken by the Church in the recovery of its deepest appeal to the human heart when the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is restored to its rightful place in the service of worship and its power and meaning interpreted and understood as they should be.

It is a mistake to place the responsibility for the collapse of worship in many Protestant churches solely with the minister. A large share of it belongs to the congregation. Untrained for worship, many people seem to have lost their capacity for it. Their worshipping disposition has become more or less atrophied. Not habituated to the practice of worship, they assume in church more or less the attitude of the spectator and of the critic. Consciously or unconsciously they are challenging the whole occasion to capture their initial attention, if it can, and then to hold it. From this point of view the man or woman who goes to church and feels that he "gets nothing out of it" is probably pronouncing a judgment on himself.[15] He is listening to the words of the Bible; he is repeating the same psalms that were used in the synagogue where Jesus worshipped; he is singing the hymns which voice the aspirations of the ages; and at least the opportunity is given to him for prayer and communion with God. If all of this means nothing to him or brings nothing to him, but leaves him as it found him, a spectator or critic and not a participant, he may well examine himself carefully to see if the trouble may not lie, at least in part, in himself.

Some people do not enjoy picture galleries. But they are wise enough usually not to condemn Rembrandt or Velasquez on that account. Other people do not like poetry. But they do not blame this failure to enjoy their verses on de Musset or Alfred Noyes. When still other people confess that they do not care for the church service, why, then, in that one instance, take it for granted that the Church is to blame for it? Let any humble, contrite-hearted man, looking with confidence for "grace to help," come to church, not to play the rôle of judge or critic,

[15] See Willard L. Sperry, "Disciplines of Liberty," p. 149.

and he will not depart empty of soul. "On Sunday," wrote Julia Ward Howe, "we bring the worn and dim currency of our life to be redeemed by the pure gold of the supreme wisdom. I bring to church my coppers and small pieces and take away a shining gold piece."[16] In a similar spirit of humility, any one may bring even a mustard seed of faith to the service of the Church, and receive power, if not to remove mountains, at least to resist some besetting sin, or redeem some neglected opportunity.

What one receives, however, from the service of the Church is only one-half of the story. The other often neglected half is composed of what each one can do for it. People forget that the worship of the Church is not made for the congregation, but by it. They need to have explained to them that the intangible but easily recognizable temper of a church service is a composite of the contribution made to it by each separate member of the congregation. In his sermon on Unconscious Influence, Horace Bushnell has made this truth very clear: "The preaching of Christ is often so unfruitful, . . . not because the truth ceases to be truth, nor, of necessity, because it is preached in a less vivid manner, but because there are so many influences preaching against the preacher. . . . Their lives and especially the lives of those who profess what is better, are so many unconscious influences, ever streaming forth upon the people and back and forth between each other. . . . And how can he 'prevail against so many'? . . . When the people of God are glowing with spiritual devotion to Him, and love to men, then the case is different; then they are preaching with the preacher and making an atmosphere of warmth for his words to fall in. Great is the company of them that publish the truth and proportionately great is its power."[17]

Talk about the decline of the pulpit today is an old story. But the article was timely not long ago that called attention to the decline of the pew. There was a time when "getting ready for church" meant something else than a hurried preparation to leave the house. It makes hard going for the Spirit of God when the whole effort of the Christian is taken up with getting himself inside church doors before the service is too far over. Certainly

[16] Life and Letters, ibid., p. 311.
[17] Horace Bushnell, "Sermons for the New Life," p. 204.

the pew can make uphill work for the pulpit. What the Church needs is members who are heart and soul in search of those results which alone give the Church the right to exist. The Church has a right to expect that its members will do their part as much as that the minister shall do his share. A prepared pew instead of a hurried pew, a sympathetic and cooperative pew instead of a passive or critical pew, often makes all the difference between the Church's power or weakness.

What a church service can become with and by and for a spiritually cooperating congregation has been well described by the Quaker, John Barclay: "Such is the certainty of that divine strength that is communicated by thus meeting together and waiting in silence upon God that sometimes when one hath come in that hath been unwatchful and wandering in his mind, or suddenly out of the hurry of outward business,—this power being in a good measure raised in the whole meeting, will suddenly lay hold upon his spirit and wonderfully help to raise up the good in him, even as the warmth would take hold upon a man that is cold, . . . or if one come in rude and wicked, he will feel himself unable to resist, the powers of darkness in him will be chained down, and the grace in him will be raised to the redeeming of his soul."[18]

For many people, the service of worship would be revolutionized if they would begin to regard it as an occasion for doing something, as well as an opportunity for getting something. They must become convinced that a service of worship presents the grandest opportunity for service that is likely to come to them. The paralysis of common worship is due to the fact that it has been so little congregational. The people feel that they have nothing to do. In reality, public worship gives the churchgoer his finest chance for spiritual service. He can help to create the two dominant moods which make effective the worship of the Church. The first is that of stillness. The Spirit of God has hard work to cast its spell upon a congregation which is engaged, up to the moment the service begins, in more or less noisy talk and interchange of greetings and remarks. For silence is the very secret and medium of spiritual efficacy. It is one of the most evident and indispensable conditions of real worship. The

[18] "Views of Christian Doctrine," p. 191.

words, "Be still and know that I am God,"[19] might well be placed before the eyes of many a modern congregation. Of the spiritual possibilities of stillness, every one of us must have had some vivid experience. Thus Nature best ministers to us. And the Church needs to recapture this ministry of silence. Whoever has knelt, whether in a great cathedral or in a little chapel, where nothing could be heard save the beating of one's own heart, has felt himself in the very presence of the Eternal. The friendly noisiness and sibilant conversations appropriate enough at other times and places, when carried on as they are thoughtlessly in the moments preceding the service of worship, are the source of untold loss in the spiritual ministry possible to the Church in our modern world. The mood which should be cultivated in worship by him who would do most for himself and for others has been well expressed in the last verse of a too little used hymn of Charles Wesley:

"From the world of sin and noise
And hurry I withdraw,
For the small and inward voice
I wait with humble awe:
Silent am I now and still
Dare not in Thy presence move;
To my waiting soul reveal
The secret of Thy love."

The other mood upon which the spiritual efficacy of the service of worship depends which every worshipper can help to create, is that of joy, of gladness, of a great undercurrent of spiritual vitality that literally lifts the whole congregation to the uplands of hope and life. A church service that is not full of it does not do the thing that it is meant to do. It is intended to be a display to men of the supernatural power of the Christian faith. A dull and listless congregation is a denial of the enthusiasm and joy which should accompany every proclamation of the Gospel.

Much of our public worship is too sad, gloomy and heavy, and therefore, devoid of a truly vitalizing power. In part, this may be due to the Puritan tradition which made the mourner's bench the most conspicuous feature of the sanctuary. But chiefly, it is due to the fact that the worshippers do not realize that they must

[19] Psalm 48:10.

get to work, witness to the reality of their faith, and so earn or deserve the reinvigoration of which they have come in search and the joy which flows from it. The average congregation is in a passive and receptive, rather than an active and cooperative, mood. Yet the responsibility rests on their souls to create an atmosphere in which spiritual miracles even can be wrought. They can repeat the words with an intensity which will make the psalm what it really is, the striking of the chords; and many a heart will vibrate to it. By the heart and soul that they put into the singing of the hymns, they can make a joy and gladness to prevail that will draw everyone present into a triumphant mood of praise and thanksgiving and victory. Contemporary Christianity is doubtless too little vocal.

In that respect, it reverses the mood of the early disciples who declared: "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."[20] Modern Christians omit the word "but." A feeling of reserve, due in part to reverence, but also in part to a false timidity or downright lack of personal conviction, keeps them from uttering in personal ways during six days of the week the faith that is, or should be, in them. All the more reason, therefore, for uttering in corporate fashion, on the first day, their common faith at the hour of common prayer and worship. It ought to be impossible for even a stranger to the meaning of the Evangel to enter a Christian Church during worship and not feel, and respond to, its dominant note: "This is the victory which overcometh the world even our faith."[21] The Psalmist understood this when he said: "Let the *people* praise thee, O God, let *all* the people praise thee: *then* . . . God even our God shall bless us and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him."[22] The blessing of God waits today on the common praise of all the people; and only on the wings of such triumphant praise shall that blessing spread to the ends of the earth.

Visitors see at the entrance to the Church of St. Anne de Beaupré a great pile of crutches, bandages, and harnesses by which crippled bodies were supported and maimed people were enabled to walk. They bear mute testimony to the healing benefits received by them at that shrine. No longer needed, their grateful owners have left them there.

[20] Acts 4:20.
[21] I John 5:4.
[22] Ps. 67:5–7.

The invisible counterpart of those discarded impediments ought to be the trophies of victory to the credit of every church. For there a lame soul should be made able to walk, a paralytic should be made whole, blind souls should be made to see, and these all "leaping up should stand and walk, leaping and praising God."[23] This scene at the Gate of the Temple, which is called Beautiful, is repeated whenever and wherever the Presence of Christ is realized in a true service of worship.

[23] Acts 3:8.

Chapter VIII

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND HUMAN BROTHERHOOD

No one can read the New Testament thoughtfully and not discover that the Christian Gospel even in its infancy contemplated nothing less than the re-constitution of human society. Human relations were to be reestablished on new and spiritual foundations. One's mind is usually so preoccupied in reading the Gospels and the Epistles with their message to the individual that one forgets that they contain a new and a revolutionary program for the reordering of men's social relations. We find its outlines in the very first Christian preaching, and as the New Testament teaching proceeds, the new social idealism is developed in some of its most spiritual and eloquent passages. The whole of it is, of course, implicit in the plain teaching of Christ, Himself. In His practical ministry, He ignored the conventional distinctions of human society. It is not apparent that He was even conscious of the lines which contemporary opinion drew between Jew and Samaritan, Pharisee and publican, orthodox and sinner, Palestine and Rome. His conception of human life and society dealt so in universals that these distinctions faded out and disappeared.

In His teaching appear the outlines and framework of a broad spiritual brotherhood. "The genius of His Gospel was the extension of the idea of the family to include all humanity"; its ideal, a beloved community in which all men, as children of the one Father, find and actually feel themselves to be brothers. That is to say, Brotherhood is not an incident in the religion of Jesus, but the essence and glory of His Gospel, which is compressed into one glowing and unforgettable sentence: "For One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."[1] When the time comes for the Christian faith to move out

[1] St. Matt. 23:8.

into the great pagan and Roman world, which was split, divided, torn apart with hatreds of race, creed, religion, and seething with social revolution, it proclaims from the first a new conception of human society in which all mankind is to be bound together in a spiritual unity.

Nothing is more wonderful than the spiritual audacity with which this conception of human society is proclaimed and upheld by the first Christian preachers. Did ever a preacher speak to more incredulous hearers than St. Paul in saying to the men of Athens: "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth"?[2] Did ever a proposition appear on its face to be more preposterous? The record, however, of these early days in the Acts, shows that not only the preachers but the individuals composing these early Christian communities, were infatuated with this truth of a new and spiritual brotherhood that ran quite athwart the conventional divisions of the human race. Their own "beloved communities" were made up literally of men from all the nations that dwelt on the face of the whole earth: a cosmopolitan company of human opposites which actually realized in the new relationships a spiritual unity of common love. The inflexible heart of the exclusive Jew yielded to a love that was mightier than his own pride of race and religion and embraced the hated Gentile within his new fellowship; the Roman bent his neck and bowed his knee before Him in conformity with whose will he had found his peace, the one Lord and Master of all mankind. Thus did this wonderful thing happen; the old divisions disappeared, the old antipathies were healed. With the eye of faith, these little groups of Christians saw that the great power of pagan empires was to fall into the dust, and on its ruins a new structure was to rise, built upon the broad foundation of the unity of all mankind in Jesus Christ. That social vision possessed the early preachers and the early Church.

Some of the most eloquent passages in the later New Testament undertake to sketch this new and spiritual community, embracing all mankind; a spiritual society universal in its reach and scope. St. Paul uses the familiar imagery of the Roman Empire of which he, himself, was a proud citizen; an imperial system indeed that included all the nations of the Mediterranean world in its sway.

[2] Acts 17:26.

But the kingdom we share with Christ, he taught, is an even prouder empire. Our citizenship is in a heavenly community. Ours is, not a political, but a spiritual society. We are fellow-citizens with all saints, and of the very household of God;[3] not by the clamps of Roman power are we held together, but in the bonds of a spiritual fellowship; not in a building made by hands do we reside but in a habitation of God in the Spirit. And in the glow of his spiritual imagination he pictures a society composed of all men that are spiritually regenerate, of every race and every age, and dwelling in the inclusive spiritual commonwealth of the household of God. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews in his conception of human society substitutes for the familiar Jewish conception of a spiritual Israel the broader Christian conception of a spiritual community that is independent of racial claims and prerogatives. "Ye are come," he declares, "unto Mount Zion and unto the city of the living God."[4] A heavenly Jerusalem, and not a geographical nor an historical; an innumerable host, and not a society limited to a chosen people; a general and not a particular assembly; the Church of the first-born who are enrolled in Heaven, and not an ecclesia of the separate and elect; a multitude composed of the spirits of all just men made perfect.

Such in roughest outline is the teaching of the New Testament in regard to the true and ultimate constitution of human society. It is an ideal, a spiritual community, broader than any secular conception of the social order, ensphering all mankind in a universal and spiritual brotherhood.

That teaching has never been abrogated, that ideal has never struck its colours. As often as the Church has most faithfully mirrored the heart of the New Testament, it has held up, in the midst of a divided, selfish and distracted world, this ideal of human brotherhood. And even in its darkest days, the Church has never let it drop wholly out of sight. It has embedded it in its Creed, embodied it in its hymns, enshrined it in its prayers. That ideal is with us yet, the unrevoked charter of the Christian Church. Take this idea of a spiritual brotherhood and set it up as a standard in the midst of our modern world, and some conception will be gained of the need of an institution

[3] See Eph. 2:19, 22; 2 Cor. 5:1.
[4] Heb. 12:22.

that is irrevocably committed to it. Truly has it been said that the crying need of our modern world in every field of endeavour is a clear commanding conception of the common good; a perception that the good of humanity as a whole is not a dream but is more permanently real than present reality, and that the good of any class or sect or nation can only, in fact, be realized in the good of all. How to *get together* in religion, in politics, in industry, in social relations,—that is felt to be the key to the situation today. All earnest men and women are now devotedly set on discovering how to create the spirit by which this great ideal may come true. But the difficulty is that the solution thus far has escaped us. All kinds of schemes are proposed for bringing mutual understanding and brotherliness about, but the schemes do not work. Up to this very hour, in spite of all kinds of associations and Internationals, we find that the world still clings with an iron grip to the selfish policy of each group or nation for itself; and the lines of division seem to cut deeper and deeper, and render the prospect of their obliteration remote. The appeal to sectional loyalties continues to win an instant and an enthusiastic response. Lift the denominational banner, or the national banner, or the labour banner, and a crowd springs up at once all aflame with partisan zeal.

This modern world of ours simply does not believe in the spiritual brotherhood of man. It talks about it, it sings about it, it prays about it,—but it is still a new commandment because ninety per cent of our fellows, indeed of our church members, ignore the injunction that we should all in any real or vital sense love one another. Men will subscribe to it as a creed, but they will not let it create the upheaval that it should in their practice. Alienation and strife and the isolation they cause abound though we declare that life is fellowship, and that isolation is death. Caste is a hoary and implacable tyrant. Fashion enslaves us. Convention binds us. Prejudices keep us strangers. The question is, What power or motive is strong enough, spiritual enough, to save us from ourselves and actually convert us into real believers in human brotherhood, and establish that creed as the master passion of our souls which we are prepared to back not only with our opinions, but with our lives?

Survey with candid eye the broad field of human organ-

ization and inspiration for the spiritual leadership that shall guide us out of our Egyptian bondage to sectarian interest and arouse within us a saving sense of corporate human loyalty, and one must pause at last before the Church as the one organized force, so constituted by faith, tradition and experience as to be able to perform this ministry of the reconciliation of lower and sectional interests; this elevation of many lesser loyalties into a single all-inclusive higher loyalty. For the Church rests upon the one fundamental interest which all mankind has in common.

We will pause here before the question of the real constitution of our human nature. Are men ultimately alike or are they different? Does humanity differ at its core, just as it differs upon its surface? Or the deeper one penetrates into the heart of humanity, do the cross currents of life and feeling subside and the lives of men everywhere really flow in the same direction? Fortunately, modern science has authoritatively answered this question for us. "It is impossible," a great scientist has written, "to mistake or to misapprehend the multiplied proofs of the unity of the human species." And if the oneness of men is "the instinctive presupposition of all civilized men," that oneness finds its deepest illustration in the sphere of religion. Max Mueller once declared that "the source of all religion in the human heart is the perception of the Infinite—the yearning of the soul after God."[5] In these deep places of their nature, all men clasp hands and are brothers." They share together the joys and sorrows, hopes and fears that proceed from a central passion, common to them all, to know God and to enjoy Him forever. In Him all men are one. Justice Holmes, of the United States Supreme Court, some years ago quoted the remark of a friend to the effect that "after all, the only interesting thing is religion"; and he added for himself, "I think it is true if you take the word a little broadly and include under it the passionate curiosity as well as the passionate awe which we feel before the fact of the mystery of the universe. This curiosity is our most informatively human appetite."[6] Religion, therefore,

[5] Gifford Lectures, 1892, pp. 7, 480. See also Charles Cuthbert Hall, "Christ and the Human Race," 1906, Lecture III.
[6] Quoted in William Jewett Tucker, "The Making and Unmaking of the Preacher," 1898, pp. 119, 120.

is the one universal interest unifying all men everywhere. And the only institution "which still speaks, however ineffectually for the religious interest especially is the Church." "The Church says quite simply and directly to all our bewildering world, 'One is your Father and all ye are brethren'."

And the Church today does actually bring together in one body, and into one fellowship, a more diverse and cosmopolitan group of people than are united by any other interest. "There is no other institution which can keep open spiritual house for all kinds and conditions of men."[7] It is sometimes charged that our churches are class-conscious, made up of people of one stamp or type, reproducing pretty accurately the subdivisions of the secular social order. Without doubt, there is some of this kind of grouping, especially in Protestant churches where no definite parochial lines are drawn. Yet, it is the rule and not the exception for a congregation really to be a cross-section of society that unites in fellowship people of the most diverse types of training, occupation, and social experience. Nearly every human element is there. In other relationships of life people group themselves according to their separate trades and tastes. But the religious interest is something which they have in common and Christian worship binds them all together. Watch a representative congregation leaving church and follow them whither they go. Their courses lie in every direction of the social compass. They constitute a composite picture of modern society. In their number are native and foreign, employer and employee, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, every type of thought and background of experience. A distinct and often overlooked value of the Church lies in this ability to get people to meet and mingle who are separated from each other at every other point of their experience. If they did not meet thus they would never meet at all.

Evidently, the Church possesses a somewhat unique opportunity of becoming a school of democracy, the one centre in any community where people of the most diverse types can learn to know, respect, understand and love one another. Stop a moment to consider the importance of such training in social relationships in a world in which isolation means alienation and lack of mutual understand-

[7] Willard L. Sperry, "Disciplines of Liberty," pp. 177–178.

ing breeds strife and ill will, and the social significance of the Church in our modern world is clearly apparent.

That the Early Church leaders were wide awake to this very opportunity, the most casual reading of the New Testament is sufficient to show. There reiterated emphasis is laid on what is called "love of the brethren." The word 'brother' is a technical word in the New Testament writings, and means 'fellow-Christian.' When the early Christians are exhorted, therefore, to love the brethren, or to "lay down [their] lives for the brethren,"[8] they are being urged to love not their fellowmen in general, but their fellow church members. Upon this point every New Testament teacher insists. Thus St. Paul, in a significant passage in the Epistle to the Galatians, writes, "So then as we have opportunity let us work that which is good to all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of faith."[9] The Apostles without exception felt that Christianity could give no more impressive witness of its worth to the world than the spectacle of these little Christian communities, all the members of which loved one another fervently.

Study the social composition of these groups of Christians in that ancient world and the reason for this conviction becomes plain. Who were these "brethren"? From what ranks of society did they come? The answer to these questions discloses one of the most interesting features of Early Church life. If we read over the list of names, for example, to be found in the last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, we find names of Romans and names of Jews and names of Gentiles. There are aristocratic names and slave names; names of people both educated and ignorant; well-known names and names of those of whom no one had ever heard. The Epistle to Philemon within the space of one short chapter sketches for us a rich Gentile merchant, an educated Hebrew of the strictest sect of the Pharisees, and an ignorant and degraded slave. If we run over in our minds the diverse personalities mentioned in the book of the Acts, in the conglomerate group is an ignorant jailer, a Roman centurion, an Ethiopian officer, a half-witted girl, a wealthy woman of Philippi, an educated physician and a lame beggar.

[8] I St. John 3:16. See Bishop Lightfoot's commentary in loco.

[9] Galatians 6:10.

These early communities were recruited from all ranks of the existing social order. The social significance of this heretofore unknown grouping of the most diverse and even antagonistic elements of ancient society in one fellowship did not escape the discerning eye of the Apostles. If everyone within these groups could thus be made over into a brother of everyone else, then evidently a universal brotherhood already was a demonstrably feasible program. If Paul the Pharisee, Philemon the Gentile, and Onesimus the slave, could all learn to love one another, then all the people on earth could learn to do so. If love could turn from dream to reality in the Church at Corinth it could become a reality in the world at large. If Epaphroditus was willing to die for Paul, and Paul willing to lay down his life for Euodia and Syntyche, then no chasm of the social world remained that could not be bridged. If the rich Gaius would receive nameless itinerant missionaries into his own home, and if Demetrius, the silversmith, and John of Patmos were willing to befriend each other, then the practicability of the principle of universal brotherhood might be accepted without further illustration or proof.

Therefore, the Apostles gave themselves to the task of cultivating love, denial and sacrifice between the members of those first Christian communities who had nothing in common except the love of Jesus Christ. As some of the greatest words of Jesus were lessons in mutual love within the circle of the Twelve, so the occasion of some of the grandest passages in the epistles was the repeated need to teach these divergent and opposite types of people that composed the early churches to love each other. The immortal thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians was written primarily to compose a church quarrel that had broken out among the brethren in that church. The passage in the letter to the Philippians that contains the fullest Pauline expression of the great Christian doctrine of the Incarnation is primarily a loving exhortation to two women in that church who were failures in this love for one another and so were in danger of fomenting strife through vainglory.[10] When these groups of Christians, high and low, freemen and slaves, rich and poor, sat down together in love about the Table of the Lord, the foundations of a universal brotherhood were laid, and a social democracy

[10] Phil 2:5–11, 4:2.

was realized, within these small groups, which is destined to draw one day within its circle all the children of men.

What the world needed, as those first Christian teachers were religious and social statesmen enough to perceive, was a demonstration that Christian brotherhood can be made a reality; that the Christian principle of love is strong enough, is warm enough, is real enough to bind together in a real spiritual unity the most diverse and different types of men. The pagan world must be shown that there was but one solution of its social problem, but one cure for its social disorders, but one principle that could heal it of its hatreds, and usher in its peace. And that solution, that remedy, was the principle: "if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another,"[11] shown to them embodied in the Christian communities.

Thus, in the midst of that ancient world, were the foundations of a new society silently laid. "The world then was like some great field of cooled lava on the slopes of a volcano, all broken up by a labyrinth of clefts and cracks, at the bottom of which one can see the flicker of sulphurous flames. Great gulfs of national hatred, of fierce enmities of race, language, and religion; wide separations of social condition, far profounder than anything of the sort which we know, split mankind into fragments. On the one side was the freeman, on the other, the slave; on the one side, the Gentile, on the other, the Jew; on the one side, the insolence and hard-handedness of Roman rule, on the other, the impotent, and, therefore, envenomed hatred of conquered peoples. And all this fabric, full of active repulsions and disintegrating forces, was bound together into an artificial and unreal unity by the iron clamp of Rome's power, holding up the bulging walls that were ready to fall—the unity of the slave-gang manacled together for easier driving. Into this hideous condition of things the Gospel comes, and silently flings its clasping tendrils over the wide gaps, and binds the crumbling structure of human society with a new bond, real and living."[12]

The same opportunity confronts the Church today. Within its fellowship, as we have seen, are to be found the most diverse human types in our modern world. Secular society is still rent asunder by racial distinctions,

[11] I St. John 4:11.

[12] "Week-day Evening Addresses," by Alexander Maclaren, p. 126.

class antagonisms, economic warfare, and national hatreds. If the churches can create within their own fellowship a brotherhood that is as real and convincing as those early obscure Christian communities were to the great hostile majorities encircling them, they will be laying the spiritual foundations of a new social order.

To this end, simple and homely as it may appear, the members and ministers of churches may well devote their full strength.[13] For this end is as difficult of accomplishment as the opportunity to undertake it is immediate and ready at hand. It is harder to love our brethren whom we do see than to fancy we love those whom we do not see. It is easier to glow with an imaginative love for our brethren across the sea, than to love, in deed as well as in word, the unattractive and uncongenial church member who occupies the next pew. Hence arise the disappointing aspects of parochial life. Often the management of church affairs falls within the hands of a few; instead of presenting even the appearance of a real democracy, many a congregation is openly tyrannized over by a tenacious and unrelenting oligarchy who have a death grip on its affairs. Small monarchical cliques like these in a modern democracy are bound to be a source of fret and strife, illustrated by the tragic reply of a young woman to the question why she did not attend church: "Father says that we have trouble enough at home." The harm thus done to the development and extension of fellowship and real hospitality is a serious indictment of many a church today.

A church ought to be the most brotherly place on earth. Yet some are free to say that they have discovered more real brotherliness in clubs and lodges than they have found in the Church. They maintain that strangers are eyed as they enter church in a way to suggest that the pew-holders felt that they should have had the right to black-ball them before they were admitted. Too often church members show no concern of any kind with the people in the pew behind, unless they sing out of tune, when they brace themselves to the extreme measure of turning around to look at them. There is much more damage done and loss suffered by the Church through these small failures in graciousness than is often realized. Men today are everywhere hungry for friendship. And

[13] See "Building the Church," by C. E. Jefferson, pp. 43–78.

upon the degree in which separate human units can be taken up into a warm inclusive social life, depends the ability of the Church to create a true social democracy. In providing the opportunity for lonely people to know the warmth of human fellowship the Church is performing a powerful ministry of reconciliation in our modern world.

In this connection, an interesting and valuable suggestion has recently been made; that the Church act as a spiritual interpreter of men to each other at the point of their different vocations.[14] The specialization of our modern world tends to isolate men. The lawyer has nothing to do with the doctor, nor the teacher with the man of business. The deeper meanings of Church unity are seen not in "the healing of sectarian schisms, but in a restoring of the interrupted and broken lines of human communication between the major groups of the industrial, professional and political world." This will be brought about, not by common participation in "church work," but by "the creation and dissemination of a genuinely catholic Christian spirit. . . . People must have a sense of a common quality of spirit which goes into their varied labour. . . . They are in constant peril of becoming religiously provincial and religiously discouraged because they do not sense the existence of prophetic spirits all around them in the common world. Where are these specialists to meet on common ground?" It is in the inclusive spiritual fellowships of the Church that all sorts and conditions of thinkers and workers can be interpreted to each other, see their tasks as aspects of one common spiritual enterprise and feel themselves to be brothers one of another because all are labourers together with God. So deep, so real, are the possibilities of fellowship within the Church today. If the members of churches can be persuaded to take the life together of brothers and sisters in a true home as the pattern of their church relations, they will be hastening the day when all men shall be brothers. For that "love of the brethren" is the demonstration of the vitality of the Christian principle for which the world waits.

It is not, of course, meant that that principle finds its full scope within the circle of church fellowship. There remains that higher definition of the office of Church

[14] Willard L. Sperry, "The Disciplines of Liberty," p. 172.

as the rebuilder of human society which was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, and of the higher Christian loyalty which that definition implies. According to some of the most inspiring passages in the New Testament, the Church is more than a local congregation. It is a spiritual commonwealth, a City of God, the Kingdom of Heaven, an ideal society whose boundaries are not coterminous with those of secular society, and whose constitution is not of men, but of God. Of this commonwealth, all who bear the name of Christ are citizens, to this kingdom they belong, into this higher brotherhood they have been inducted. To it they owe their supreme allegiance. Their ultimate loyalty is pledged to its ideals. They are committed to its program and support. It is, in effect, a spiritual superstate, literally above the kingdoms and powers of this earth. "Our citizenship," says St. Paul in a striking sentence, "is in heaven."[15] This statement, of course, is not to be taken by us nor does it mean in the New Testament, that loyalty to existing institutions and governments may be flouted. On the contrary, the pages of the New Testament are full of exhortations to the disciples to be good citizens of earthly kingdoms, and to discharge faithfully their duties to the secular states.[16] Rather the effect in practice of the commanding Idea that the Christian's ultimate loyalty is to the spiritual commonwealth to which by reason of his Christian allegiance he belongs, is to fulfill the lesser relationships by including them in the greater: to eradicate little by little sectional and provincial motives, caste notions, racial antipathies, national suspicions and hatreds, and to make one in a real sense a citizen of the world, to endow one with that cosmopolitan and inclusive sympathy which outlaws the lesser and lower passions that divide mankind and split it into opposing fragments.

Nowhere else in the world of thought is there to be found an Idea at once so comprehensive, and so powerful, making for the new social order for which the whole creation groans and waits. Here is a social principle embedded in the New Testament, and at work in the heart of humanity which is capable of producing vast social reformations and ultimately the social unification of mankind. It is the unique characteristic of the Christian

[15] Phil. 3:20 (R. V.).
[16] See Titus 3:1; I St. Pet. 2:13, 17; Rom. 13:1.

Church, however feebly and incompletely it is used and applied, that it possesses this social Idea of vast hidden power and meaning. This Idea has inspired the greatest spiritual prophets of our time. It made a world-citizen of the Apostle Paul and lifted him above the social and the political divisions and hatreds of this time. It was the mighty dynamic, wrapped up in this conception of a universal and spiritual brotherhood, of which he was a loyal citizen with all the saints, which emancipated him from the particularism of a Pharisee into the most cosmopolitan spirit of which history has any knowedge.

St. Francis and Wesley, inaugurators of other great world-movements for human betterment, testified that the inspiration which lay behind their labours was this same persuasion that all mankind actually constitute a spiritual brotherhood to which they were determined to be loyal above every other loyalty and give their lives a witness though the heavens fell. The same inspiration made Livingstone the fierce and implacable foe of the slave-trade. It was a consuming fire in the soul of William Knibb which made it impossible for him to rest content in telling the good news of another life whilst his black brothers were suffering cruel bondage in this one. The advent of this conception, in man or group, is epoch-making: it marks a definite stage forward in spiritual evolution. It is full of spiritual dynamic. The energies, able to make a new world, are concealed in it. It is the prophecy and incarnates the spiritual principle by which human brotherhood shall at last be achieved.

The most urgent task of the Church, therefore, is to educate the people to appreciate the momentousness of this conception of a human brotherhood, a spiritual society which transcends the divisions and separations of the secular world, and to train them to apply this principle in the immediate social environment in which they find themselves. How urgently this leaven is needed, the most casual survey of modern social conditions makes clear. Whether or not these conditions are chiefly or solely the result of the War, they are so serious that unless modified or changed, they threaten the stability or even the destruction of the accumulated social capital of mankind. There is going on a tremendous intensification of racial antipathy. Lands that have been accustomed to think themselves the most democratic, like our own, have wit-

nessed open displays of the most striking forms of racial antagonism. A recent writer has not hesitated to refer to them as the Caste-system in American life.[17] The rise and emergence of an extraordinary organization like the Ku Klux Klan with its illiterate shibboleths, mediæval intolerance, its appeals to the lower motives of suspicion and hatred and record of secrecy and violence, is index of the degree to which modern social life has become infested with these sinister and divisive ideas. A certain portion of the press helps the mischief on by harassing the imagination of the people with wild talk about the peril of alien peoples, and thus assists in fostering a state of mind, a public opinion, which makes directly for the arraying of race against race and of creed against creed. The result of this propaganda is to introduce and spread racial ill-feeling where it did not previously exist.

The thing most to be feared in any social group is that the component racial elements or units in it should be thrown back upon themselves by outside pressure, entrench themselves in their own separate and clannish ideas, and become acutely race-conscious. The thing most to be desired is that these racial units should grow to feel that they are parts of one sympathetic and embracing social whole, to which each can make its own contribution, and from which each can receive what it needs to supplement its own possessions. What we have been witnessing recently, however, is the thing that is to be feared and not that which is to be desired. Propaganda, both subtle and overt, has been deviously at work against Negro, oriental, and Jew, which has solidified racial consciousness among us to a menacing degree, and prepared the way for strife and disorder rather than advance in the unification of society and progress toward the day of social brotherhood and peace.[18] Race-riots have their origin, in the final analysis, in a state of mind, in inherited and traditional attitudes, in racial creeds which are developed from moral antagonisms and fostered by fear. It is with a modifying of these inward attitudes, this state of mind, that a beginning must be made in any successful effort to secure higher public standards of brotherliness.

Of the antagonisms in the industrial world, it is un-

[17] See "The Caste System of North America," Ramsay Traquair, Atlantic Monthly, March, 1923.

[18] See "The Negro in Chicago," Univ. of Chicago Press.

necessary to speak at length because they have long been so familiar. Thus far little progress has been made in lessening the breach which exists between the organization of capital on the one hand and of labour on the other. Each is so entrenched in its own camp, and industrial warfare has become so common a term that some have even accepted hostility or armed neutrality as the normal and expected relation between these two mighty forces in our industrial life. The wall of partition has yet to be broken down, and a work of reconciliation has still to be performed before industrial peace and good-will even become visible on the horizon of our social life.

The Church of Christ, equipped by its mission to act as peacemaker, stands in the midst of all of these antagonisms of race, of creed, of industry. That it has not begun to perform its work of mediation, as it ought to perform it, may be freely admitted. That it has thus far possessed neither the mind nor the motive nor the passion in anything like the degree in which it needs to possess them in order to perform that mission may also be conceded. The Church has to a great extent been a reflex, a replica of existing secular conditions, it is said, and its members have not been spiritually or morally educated to the point where they have been able, in acting in their capacity as a religious group, to divest themselves of inherited or traditional attitudes and to witness for a social order in which racial and industrial divisions do not exist. All of this is probably true.

Even so, it is no time for those who see the urgent need of this work of mediation and reconciliation to withhold their loyalty from the one institution in our modern world whose very charter and constitution calls upon it to perform that work, and supplies the very principle by which alone it can be done. That principle is the mind of Christ, for whom distinctions of race and creed were human contrivances without any counterpart in divine reality. Inasmuch as the mind of Christ is ideally and potentially the mind of the Church, it is impossible that the Church shall fail, ultimately, either to adopt this attitude in principle or apply it in practice. Its witness may now be slow and feeble but, at last, it must become strong and clear. The Christian Idea has given too many evidences through the ages of vitality, spontaneity, and deathless vigour to admit of any other con-

clusion. In proportion as its commissioned prophets and teachers catch the vision of the higher Brotherhood to which all members of the Christian community belong and to whose inauguration and maintenance they are pledged, and in proportion as they make clear to all who call themselves Christians that they must rise in their actual and practical relations to the altitude of this higher loyalty, the Church will perform in our modern world its desperately needed mission of racial and industrial reconciliation.

Slowly but inexorably, the members of this spiritual commonwealth must detach themselves from a primary loyalty to groups and organizations which are admittedly sectional and human. This persuasion that our first allegiance is to the Christian Brotherhood must unseat many inherited and traditional attitudes of limited scope, banish the very words 'foreigner' or 'alien' from our speech, redeem us from narrow and provincial practices in all human relationships, and cause us to become in very truth real citizens of the world. "We must all hope much," it has been said, "from brotherly love."[19] And, indeed, it is the only way. For note that the love on which the New Testament insists is not the love of natural inclination or natural affection—instinctive, involuntary affection, but "love as a direction of the will, and as the result of effort of the will." Hence, Christian love is "the moral affection of conscious, deliberate will"; it is the effort of will to discover moral excellence wherever it exists and then to go forward from respect to esteem and finally to love. What else is so precisely needed in the world as this principle of love, so foreign to the "natural man," overleaping as it does all natural attraction and association and embracing human opposites in its all-inclusive reach and scope? "If only we Christians," said Lady Astor recently, "could be a little more loving." Where but in a Church, taught by the mind of Christ, is a love strong enough, patient enough, enduring enough to spring that will include all men in its high brotherhood?

There remains, however, to be achieved, a Brotherhood even more inclusive than that composed of the separate racial and social units within the confines of a single nationality: the brotherhood of the nations themselves.

[19] From an unpublished paper on "Christian Love," by J. Bradley.

Here the record has been so dismal and the outlook is so ominous it is no wonder that men fear that Bertrand Russell was right when he declared that it is useless ever to expect the nations to act otherwise than from motives of self-interest.[20] The fact that our civilization is headed for destruction unless they do, seems not to have altered his opinion that they never will, because in the same address he anticipates this outcome, and speaks of the "doom pitiless and sure which will overtake the human race." In a similar vein is the comment of a member of the French Chamber of Deputies in 1917 on some of President Wilson's ideas: "The only thing lacking for the realization of this admirable conception is a new humanity. Does President Wilson pretend to be able to change humanity?"

For a time, it was generally hoped that the Great War would force the rulers of the world to change at least some of the old ideas and motives which had brought on the catastrophe. One hope buoyed all thinking men during the prolonged agony of that unspeakable experience: such sickening horror could not fail to make an impression so vivid, so lasting, upon the most callous minds and obdurate hearts, that it must effect a radical change of national motive and attitude and cause even the blindest to see that a continuation after the war of the old system

[20] "Mr. Bertrand Russell, in his arresting essay, 'A Free Man's Worship,' shows us Prometheus again, but Prometheus chained to the rock and still hurling defiance against God. He proclaims the moral bankruptcy of naturalism, which he yet holds to be forced upon us. 'That man is the product of causes which had no provision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noon-day brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the débris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.'" Dean Inge. "Outspoken Essays," Second Series, p. 168.

could end only in the suicide wholesale of the human race. The longer, therefore, that the war lasted and the more terrific became its destruction of human life and property, the more sure the conviction grew that this was the end, the downfall of a whole system, even though it was as old as nationality itself, of national relationships, which could work out so fiendishly. It amounted to a *reductio ad absurdum.* It exposed so heinously what the system implied that its rejection by an outraged intelligence and conscience seemed a certainty.

It had led the way into a War which swept the globe like a prairie fire. Thirteen millions of young men had been killed outright and thirteen millions more of civilians had died through causes due directly to the war:—a holocaust such as this planet had never before witnessed. The wealth of the world had been recklessly squandered in this attempt of the nations of Europe to exterminate each other, and a total indebtedness of $44,000,000,000 had been assumed, a sum sufficient to bring them to the brink of bankruptcy and lay a burden on the backs of unborn generations. If havoc on such a scale could not teach men that the system which produced calamity so colossal must be rooted out of society, must not the conclusion be final that humanity is indeed headed for and bent upon self-destruction?

The heart-breaking discovery that the old system has survived the war and is re-entrenching itself once more in the minds of the men who are directing the policies of nations toward each other, has depressed and bewildered us and caused the spirit of cynicism and skepticism to replace the glowing hopes which followed the signing of the armistice. What fresh significance have the events of the past five years put into the word of Mazzini: "The morrow of victory is more perilous than its eve." The war itself was more tolerable, perhaps, than the events which have followed in its wake. There has been a fierce recrudescence of the old nationalism where we had hoped to see pioneering work toward real brotherhood. Starting out to "organize the friendship of the world," the Peace terms seemed to have enflamed its hatreds. Expecting the old idea of economic and political competition between the nations of the world which led directly to war, to be replaced by cooperative ideas which would lead to permanent international understanding and interdependence, we

find the old jealousies, the old rivalries, the old suspicions and the old fears governing the policies of states, intensified and not diminished by the vast struggle. Is it any wonder people have become cynical? Does not Bertrand Russell's verdict and prophecy seem justified by the event?

Yet it is impossible for thinking men to believe that this can last. It is to them incredible that the whole cosmic process at this late day should hurl humanity into a pit and thus repudiate all the pains it has taken to bring it to its present point of development. It is unthinkable that all the powers of the human mind should have been unfolded simply to be used more thoroughly to compass humanity's destruction in the end. There is an absurdity concealed in every such reading of the future from which the normal man recoils. It is incredible that the human mind, equal to everything else in the long past which threatened its welfare, should not be able to find some way out of this *impasse*. Upon the insistence that a way out exists, upon the turning of men's thoughts in its direction, upon the discovery of that way, upon the education of opinion to its full recognition, all the mind and conscience left in the world should be resolutely bent.

At this point one's thoughts revert inevitably to the Christian Church as the centre, the medium and instrument, for the organization of this new public opinion which alone can save the world. There one would think, if anywhere, is the place to foster and propagate such opinion. Where else could we more reasonably expect to do it? What other institution is more calculated by its principles, by its constitution, by its admitted mission, to undertake to create that body of ideas which must be understood, accepted, and acted upon collectively if humanity is to be saved from destruction? At bottom this is a spiritual problem. Able to conquer nature, is man able to conquer himself? Able to control the forces of the world, is he able to control the passions of his own heart? Able to overcome all other obstacles, can he overcome the obstacle of his own will? The answer to these questions will determine the fate of the modern world.

The veriest tyro in Church history is well aware that the Church has not even understood this task down to the present time. Of course, therefore, it has not begun to perform it. Down to the present time the Church has not

even conceived that it had any other duty than to be the handmaid of the state. Occasionally, as in the prophetic soul of a Savonarola, or of a John Knox, the voice of God has defied the secular policies of the day. But it cannot be said that these men uttered the voice of the Church. Bound by tradition, blinded by convention, immersed in the idea that its mission concerned the spiritual needs of the soul but not the policies of governments, the Church has not even attempted to bring the selfish ideas of the state to the bar of the Christian Idea which is their utter opposite. The most ardent Church apologist must admit the truth of that indictment. In extenuation it can only be urged that the Church is still in the making. It did not spring full-orbed from the mind of Christ. Not many wise, not many powerful composed its rank and file and it has to be taught and led gradually into a comprehension of its mission. If any soul, eager for a changed world, feels this to be an admission of failure and ground for steering clear of it, there is nothing more to be said. Not until our own day has the Church begun fully to realize that the Christian Idea is as binding upon the state as upon the individual; that the words of Jesus, "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth,"[21] "the last shall be first and the first last,"[22] apply to nations as well as to men, and that the laws of good-will, of service, of the substitution of cooperation for distrust and hatred are the Christian laws for the state as well as of the individual.

Because the Church of our day had never tried and so never learned how to make half its collective strength felt in the councils of the nations it was not competent to prevent the Great War. That must be owned up to openly, and whatever of humiliation belongs to the Church because of it must be borne. The roots of that war, as we well know today, lay back in the long years which preceded it. For generations international methods and policies had been paving the way for it. The only chance to prevent it lay in the century which preceded it. Then the Church did not understand its business, and it must therefore bear its reproach. It must bear also whatever reproach belongs to it for failing during the struggle itself to maintain any attitude whatever higher than that of the secular world.

[21] St. Luke 22:27.
[22] St. Matt. 20:46.

Some, perhaps a great host if they were all counted, do not in retrospect find themselves conscience free at this point. Was the spiritual note struck in those dreadful years in the same key as the gospel of Jesus? When they came to church were men pointed to altitudes high above the passions of this world? Was the hunger of the soul in the midst of such dreadful combat for some word of reconciliation really satisfied? Or did the Church echo the accent of the rostrum and repeat the language of the political platform? Was not the appeal made direct to the same emotions generated in the outside world? Was not the rattle of the sabre heard in the chancel and did the preacher differentiate himself materially from the recruiting sergeant? These questions will haunt many a heart, and shame many a conscience for years. For they lay their finger on the spot where there must be a house-cleaning in the Church if it is to perform its task of reconciliation among the nations at this critical hour in the history of mankind.

The century-long warfare for ascendency between Pope and Emperor in the Middle Ages has its counterpart in our modern world. Is the State to control the Church, or is the Church to maintain its independence of the State and to utter its own free, God-given message, in faithful accord with a spiritual society, high above the kingdoms and principalities of this world to which it has given its allegiance? When crises arise, shall the Church accommodate the principles which it has espoused to the exigencies of contemporary politics, or shall the Church refuse to abandon its ideal and emphasize any and every divergence between them? Shall the Church, in a word, abdicate its religious office, as it must, to echo the policies of governments, or shall it bring the message of religion to bear upon the proceedings in Halls of Parliament and Houses of Congress? Upon the answer of our generation to these questions depends whether these modern states and the Church of today are to have any future. The Church does know its business now. Unable to prevent the last war, it is able or ought to develop the ability to prevent the next one. Should the Church effect no self-cure of its former incompetency to influence opinion to the point of the modification or abandonment of a system, sure to spell the ruin of mankind, it will certainly merit the indifference or even the contempt of all serious-think-

ing men. As General Tasker Bliss has said: "If the churches cannot agree to do that, it will not be done. Nor will it be done until the good God puts into them the proper spirit of their religion. The responsibility is entirely upon the professing Christians of the United States. If another war like the last one should come, they will be responsible for every drop of blood that will be shed and for every dollar wastefully expended."

It is high time that a beginning was made in the performance of this task, for the Church has not an hour to lose. Five years after the War, the author of "Painted Windows" can write: "If the Christian would know how far his Church has fallen from power, let him reflect that, even after the sorrow and desolation of a world-conflict, there is no atmosphere in Europe rendering the savagery of submarine warfare unthinkable—utterly unthinkable to the conscience of mankind."[23]

The Christian, however, who studies the Church in its relation to these aspects of our modern world, will discover that it has, through its accredited leaders, begun to utter warnings and call upon Christians everywhere to enlist in a new and holy crusade against the war-system. In England, the Church is in motion with the aim of putting its full collective strength into the formation of a general opinion opposed to war.[24] In America the Federal Council of the Churches, the Church Peace Union, and other organizations send literature broadcast and are calling upon the churches to present a solid front against the old system and work hard to educate opinion in the direction of international good-will and world-brotherhood.[25] Never before in its history has the Church spoken for peace with such force as it has begun to speak today. As this movement gains in momentum, it is bound to have far-reaching results. The war-system cannot permanently resist it.

This is not intended to mean that Christians will soon agree on the question whether a resort to arms can ever be reconciled, under any circumstances, with the principles of their religion. It cannot yet be claimed that the pacifist

[23] "Painted Windows," by the author of "The Mirrors of Downing Street," p. 217.

[24] "What has the Church of Christ to Say?" by J. H. Jowett, British Weekly, September 7, 1922.

[25] "What the Churches Are Doing for Peace," published by the Church Peace Union.

position has been proved, to universal satisfaction, to be the only possible Christian position. The occasional use in the future of an international force to put down disorder in some part of the world may be a necessity. But the system that capitalizes old national hatreds in the name of "preparedness," wages the wars that ensue and, in its greed for spoils, sows the seeds of new wars in its peace treaties is something else altogether. It fosters suspicion, fear and hatred. It puts no veto on the deliberate purpose of one nation to exterminate another when the time is opportune. The national life, in that case, proceeds upon the presumption that that occasion is bound to arise and that expectation, in its turn, causes it to arise. Thus the thoughts of men travel in a vicious circle, inevitably and inexorably to the point at last where that policy of extermination is put to the test of trial in war.

Here, then, is the place to begin. The thoughts of men in these matters must be altered at their source. They must be persuaded to take a new attitude, assume a new position. A new international environment must be created, founded upon an entirely new set of ideas. For the warm-hearted but short-sighted patriotism of the provincial mind must be substituted a patriotism, equally warm-hearted but world-eyed, what has been called the international mind. "We must bring to the consideration of public business in its international aspects what I may call the international mind,"[26] said the presiding officer at the Lake Mohonk Conference on International Arbitration, on May 15, 1912. "This international mind," the speaker continued, "regards the several nations of the civilized world as friendly and cooperating equals in aiding the progress of civilization, in developing commerce and industry, and in spreading enlightenment and culture throughout the world." The first requisite for the international mind, he affirmed, is to learn to measure other people and other civilizations than our own from their own point of view and from their own standard rather than from our own; and the American people needs this international mind as much as any people ever needed it. If these words were true in 1912, how imperatively applicable have they become in 1924. Short of the creation by us and domination over us of this international mind, the war-system is

[26] "Internationalism and Foreign Missions," by William E. Strong, American Board Publications, Boston.

bound to continue to misrule the world. In a recent address a member of the German Reichstag took very much this same ground. If the age-long antagonism of the German and French nations persists, he said, both are bound to go down together. Our only salvation is to understand each other and to begin to live together.

Many influences are working today on the side and for the creation of this international mind. Commerce and industry, it has been discovered, are dependent upon the prosperity not of one nation but of all nations. Economic rivalry must be replaced by international economic cooperation or no nation whatever may expect to prosper. The great Internationals of Labour, the international organizations of philanthropy, the Council of the League of Nations, the Permanent World Court of Justice, are all influential in building up a body of international opinion and understanding. Yet none of these, either by tradition or by constitution, or by the nature of its clientele, is equipped for this work with the potential power and influence possessed by the Church of Christ.

A spiritual attitude, that rises above the barriers of race and nation, is the first and greatest requirement for the salvation of the nations. All who are concerned with the creation of a pronounced change of spiritual attitude of this kind must give the Church front rank in their plans. By its very constitution, as we have seen, its members pass into a spiritual society which is above the State. They actually belong to that spiritual commonwealth. That higher allegiance is perhaps the most powerful single factor open to our use in working for the new social order. Its beauty and promise are brought out in a touching ceremony which concludes the session of some Church Schools. The School rises and salutes the American flag with the well-known words: "I pledge allegiance to my flag, and to the country for which it stands: one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." Then, turning, to the banner of the Christian Church, the School asserts its major and final loyalty: "I pledge allegiance to my flag and to the Saviour for whose kingdom it stands: one Brotherhood uniting all mankind in service and love." Is not a whole generation educated to a patriotism which finds its consummation in universal brotherhood and service the only final solution of our problem?

But again, the Church is master of the school of ideas

upon which the international mind must draw for food and sustenance. "When all is said and done, we must seek for light not in the welter of lower interests but in the Divine Life which mysteriously dwells in us. Far above the present base strife for selfish advantage among the nations there is the life of the Spirit of Good-will. In the degree that our poor, sad race keeps its face toward that vision of a spiritually reunited humanity permeated by the spirit of good-will, enduring unity and peace will follow. To create men of good-will becomes thus the primary task of the religion of Jesus in our day. Religion in this sense has only just begun its work and the best days of Christianity are still before us. That is to say, nothing is able to do the work of religion but religion."

An eloquent proof that the Christian Idea can create a mind which can overlap national barriers and race prejudices is to be found in the character of certain foreign missionaries. Indeed, the whole foreign missionary enterprise may be well described as a gallant adventure in international good-will. Whatever measure of understanding exists today between East and West is largely due to the work of Missions. This fact is conceded by non-Christians themselves. "Viscount Chinda, the former Japanese ambassador to the United States, summed it up when he said: 'The Christian missionaries to Japan contributed to the building of an unseen bridge between East and West.' Wellington Koo, while Minister of the Chinese Republic to the United States, bore similar testimony in an address at the University of Chicago: 'Nothing which individual Americans have done in China has more strongly impressed the Chinese minds with the sincerity, the genuineness, the altruism of American friendship for China, than the spirit of service and sacrifice . . . demonstrated by American missionaries.'"[27] Even more in the character of the missionaries themselves can the power of the Christian Idea to create in the truest sense world-citizens best be seen. These men and women have been the truest, most sympathetic and appreciative interpreters to their countrymen back home of the peoples to which they have gone. They have been literally all things to all men. No remaining trace of sectionalism, prejudice, or narrowness appears in the breadth of their sympathy

[27] "The Missionary Outlook," p. 12.

and in the truly catholic dimensions of their spirit.[23] There is no cosmopolitanism in the world today to compare with that of the average missionary, while in the exceptional ambassador of Christ to the peoples of the world it rises to truly beautiful and moving proportions. One thinks of Coleridge Patteson, the missionary Bishop of the Church of England to the Melanesians. He found them physically, in most respects, objects of loathing and pity. In disposition, they were marked by a certain childish and animal good nature which easily gave way to horrible ferocity. Mentally they were almost entirely undeveloped and socially, to the last degree, disorganized. Of morals they had none. Born and bred in the cultured circles of English aristocracy that man spent his life among those people, took his place by their side, identified himself with them, championed them, loved them, always spoke well of them, was jealous for them. They were *men* to him. For years he scarcely saw any other human beings. The day he was consecrated bishop, six years after he went out, he wrote home: "How I think of those islands. How I see those bright coral, sandy beaches. Hundreds of people are crowding upon them, naked, armed. But they are my brothers now—may God enable me to do my duty by them." If there is any other idea in our modern world more able to divest men of their native separatism, more able to clothe them with the comprehensive mind, let it be produced.

The Church, then, is master of the school of ideas which both in theory and in their actual operation are able to create the mind and attitude essential to international understanding and good-will. Will not thoughtful men and women, if they find that statement is true upon investigation, or anywhere near true, hesitate to turn their backs upon the Church? What is needed is a more insistent and vigorous dissemination of these ideas and a more thorough education in them both of church people and the unchurched. Centuries of political tradition have taught them all that they have no higher loyalty than to the State, while the Church has been slow to affirm the New Testament conception of the spiritual commonwealth and all that it implies. No wonder the members of

[23] See William Jewett Tucker, "The Church in Modern Society," 1911, pp. 107 ff. Missions "teach man to know man in interpreting humanity."

churches are slow to assume the attitude and to apply the ideas contained in their Christian Creed.

A long and patient work of spiritual education thus lies before us. But is there any other better way? "What then is the rôle of the Church in such a world as this? Surely it is . . . to be the soul of society, 'the salt of the earth.' If we, Christ's people, are carrying on, year in, year out, a quiet persistent witness by word and life to 'the things that are most excellent' . . . we too shall be 'holding the world together' and opening before society the vistas of genuine progress. This is the supreme and incommunicable task of the Church; this is the priceless service we can render to the nation."[29]

Thus the City of God must gradually be enthroned in the mind of the Christian,—the broad outlines of a Brotherhood that includes all nations and all tongues. For him racial differences and national barriers have no spiritual meaning or reality; he loves his country as passionately and intensely as other men, but he sees it not at variance with other nations, isolated from them, independent of them, but as partner and cooperator with them in the inclusive spiritual commonwealth of the household of God,—where there is no east nor west, no Occident or Orient, but where all meet together in the Household of God. This is that Brotherhood of mankind for which the whole creation groans and waits. The words of an unknown Christian writer may therefore well summarize our position: "What the soul is in the body, that are Christians in the world. For the soul holds the body together and Christians hold the world together. This illustrious position has been assigned them of God, which it were unlawful of them ever to forsake."[30]

It may well be asked, also, if men realize the part that the Church has played in the preservation of Social Hope. In the darkest hours of human history a flame, however feeble, of expectation "that there are better days ahead" has continued to burn upon its altars. The value of the Christian faith embodied in the Church does not consist in the announcement only of spiritual ideals but in its

[29] Bishop Henson, quoted in "Painted Windows," p. 99.
[30] "The Missionary Outlook," p. 16.

bold affirmation also that those ideals can be attained.[31] This unconquerable faith in the practicability of the social ideal has underwritten all moral gain and achievement. For the Christian the one unpardonable sin is the lack of faith that nothing is impossible when righteousness is at stake. For faith in a God of righteousness, and faith in Christ as embodying the invincible will of God, who is destined to put all things under His feet, are the two cardinal articles in his Creed. This conviction is indispensable to the patient and indomitable worker for righteousness. And nowhere else in the broad world, if we look, shall we find it.

In the darkest days of the war, Franklin K. Lane wrote in one of his letters, dated March 18, 1918: "We shall come through because behind all this there is something that haltingly, stumblingly, makes for righteousness." Even dearer shines the Social Hope as expressed in a word of Charles Kingsley: "I am struggling through infinite darkness by means of one great bright path which I find to be the only escape from infinite confusion and chaos, the only explanation of a thousand human mysteries—I mean the Incarnation of our Lord." Similarly Paul Sabatier in his life of St. Francis of Assisi has expressed the ground of his ultimate hope. "When wearied by the world of pleasure and of toil I wish to find my soul again and live a deeper life, I can find no other Guide or Master than Jesus Christ, because in Him alone optimism is without frivolity and seriousness without despair."

If in these days of disillusioned hopes, the Church can lift Him above all the ebb and flow of opinion and the disappointing aspects of "current events," is it not performing an indispensable service in our modern world?

[31] So Ellwood, op. cit., pp. 240, 250: "Religion must furnish the dynamic which will make possible the realization of democracy; which will foster the sympathy, understanding and goodwill between individuals, classes, nations and races necessary for the working of democracy. It will not fear to put on a program of justice and fraternity between races, nations and classes."

Chapter IX

CHURCH UNITY

In only one respect may it be affirmed that church unity is not a practical problem: few people remain outside and refuse to connect themselves with any church just because there is such a great variety of churches to choose from. The disunity of Christendom did not disturb the men who expressed their religious views during their concentration in war camps. It did not even interest them.[1] People continue, as a rule, to belong to the church in which they grew up. If they change from one church to another, it is more often for practical rather than for doctrinal considerations. If a reduction took place in the number of churches it is very much to be doubted whether an increased number of church adherents would be the result. People may be bewildered by the variety of existing churches, they may often vaguely wonder why there are so many, or what may be the differences between them. But they actually associate themselves with the one which is by tradition or habit most familiar to them, and they do not withdraw from it unless some practical, or much more rarely, some intellectual or spiritual, emergency requires it. With this said, however, it must be admitted that no more urgent problem confronts the Church at the present time than that of its unification.

A disunited Church, for one thing, cannot permanently continue to maintain itself in a world determined upon unification. And one cannot think aright about the question of unity among the churches without approaching it from the larger question of the unity of mankind as a background. The whole world, as never before, is striving, in spite of all setbacks, to establish some spiritual principle of unity which shall bind it together. The demand for a greater solidarity in the religious world is part of the tendency towards new integration of hitherto divided masses in all other departments of life. In all other spheres

[1] See Bernard Iddings Bell, Atlantic Monthly.

in our modern world, the effort has been toward consolidation. For the Church to be left outside this movement is also to be left behind. A highly disorganized Church is an anachronism in a highly organized world. From the Christian point of view, however, this statement is unsatisfactory and incomplete. For the Christian Church has always claimed to possess the secret of unity, and, as was pointed out in the last chapter, to hold in its hands the spiritual principle by which the antagonisms of the world are to be reconciled. But, how can the Church expect the world to believe that the Church can do for it what the Church is unable to do for itself?[2] If the urgent task of the Church is to promote the unity of the world, how immediate and paramount becomes the duty of achieving unity within itself? The conscience of the Church is very sensitive on this point. It feels the reproach too keenly for it to be much longer endured.

Other causes are operating to make Church unity the urgent concern of the Church. The fact that many of the ideas peculiar to them, and the original basis of their independent existence, count in modern thought no longer, makes the continuance of the separate existence of these Church bodies not only unnecessary, but indefensible. In "Father and Son," by Edmund Gosse, the father who is about to marry outside his sect, stands shamefaced and rebuked while his little son of eleven shakes his finger at him and cries: "Father, don't tell me she's a Pedobaptist."[3] Time has done its work. Many of these ideas

[2] "Let me tell you a rather striking remark by an Italian friend of mine, an editor of an Italian review, and not a Roman Catholic. He was saying that every Church that persisted for any time possessed something essential to the religion of Christ. I asked him what he saw in the Roman Church that was essential. He replied at once, 'The Papacy.' I was surprised for the moment, but I saw presently what he meant. The desire of the world is for universal peace, universal harmony. Can that ever be achieved by a disunited Christendom? The nations are rivals. Their rivalry persisted at the Peace Conference, disappointing all the hopes of idealists. Must it not always persist, must not horrible carnage, awful desolation, ruinous destruction, and, at any rate, dangerous and provocative rivalries, always dog the steps of humanity until Christendom is one?" Bishop Temple in "Painted Windows," pp. 186–7

[3] Edmund Gosse, "Father and Son" 1921, p. 238.

have crumbled of themselves, and so have the edifices based upon them. The Church has been busy in replacing them, and building more substantial structures. This process is destined to continue for some time to come.

The pressure of economic necessity is also compelling churches to unite in spite of denominational resistance or the pride or prejudice of the local congregation. The high cost of living has doubtless accelerated the movement of church consolidation. The time comes in retrenchment when a church is no longer able to maintain itself even though it cuts down the salary of the minister below the subsistence point and reduces its budget so that the Church presents to the community the merest shadow of what a church ought really to be. A new conscience in Home Mission boards begins to refuse support to a church which the community does not really need, and a new dignity is shown by the ministers who decline to be immolated on the altar of denominational pride and obstinacy. Thus the number of churches is steadily going down. It needs much further reduction. Recent surveys have revealed an almost unbelievable condition of over-churching in certain districts and the sorry plight into which, as a consequence, the Church has fallen:[4]

"In Gill and Pinchot's study of the country churches of Ohio[5] we have the most complete study at present available of the lamentable condition to which this lack of foresight can reduce the Church. In the entire state there was in 1918 an average of one church for every two hundred and eighty people. Out of every hundred of these churches, sixty had fewer than one hundred members; fifty-five, fewer than seventy-five, and thirty-seven, not more than fifty members. Two-thirds of the churches, even counting in all the town churches, had no resident pastor, while in the open country only three hundred and sixty, or thirteen per cent of the two thousand eight hundred and seven churches, had resident pastors. In the denomination with the largest number of country churches the average salary paid was $857 and free use of a parsonage; in the denomination with the next largest number, $787, or $680 if a parsonage was provided."

[4] "The Church in America," William Adams Brown, pp. 197–8.

[5] "Six Thousand Country Churches," New York, 1919, pp. 8–11.

"Another recent survey disclosed many cases nearly as bad. In a Pennsylvania village of four hundred and fifty people, there are six churches; six churches in a New England village of a hundred and fifty inhabitants. In another eastern township, eighteen churches minister to a population of about a thousand."[8] The same situation exists in cities. No wonder the Church cannot grapple with the social problem of our cities when it is divided up into such small groups. In a model New England city—one of the largest in Massachusetts—half of the Protestant churches have a membership of fewer than three hundred and fifty people. Churches no stronger than that cannot really gird themselves for effective social service. Half the number of churches with twice the number of members would be more than twice as effective. The fact is that there is no solution of the economic problem of modern Protestantism short of a decided movement toward consolidation. The problem of an adequate number of ministers, of their adequate training, of their proper support, the problem of the religious education of the children, of community service and influence, all of these unsolved problems will remain unsolved as long as the Protestant churches continue to exist in such unnecessary numbers. Church leaders are now waking up to this solution, and the movement for the consolidation of Protestantism is gaining momentum.

Another powerful accelerating factor in this movement is the aroused missionary conscience of the Church. The Mission Boards of most churches now feel it to be nothing short of an iniquity to use their funds and their strength for any purpose other than the most effective propagation of Christianity at large. The invasion of a well-churched community or neighborhood for the purpose of entering their peculiar denominational idea into competition with other denominational ideas is rapidly ceasing to be considered legitimate in the actual program of modern Mission Boards. This is a practically recent achievement, but it is such a notable one and is destined to have such far-reaching results that it may properly be appraised as one of the greatest gains to the credit of the modern movement for a united Protestantism. At the present time, for

[8] Quoted in Drake, op. cit., pp. 145, 146: "The great problem of the Protestant churches is not so much to get them together as to keep them apart, at least half a mile apart."

example, the Home Missions Council and the Council of Women for Home Missions in New York represent sixty-three Boards of twenty-eight denominations. These Councils organize conferences all over the country in which administrators and missionaries meet to share experiences, exchange methods, determine policies, adjust overlapping, and make definite allotments of territory. They plan to do cooperatively the work done for Indians, Negroes, the immigrants, the Orientals, the Mormons, the migrant groups, and other elements of our diverse population. They make surveys of the great commonwealths of the West and plan a better distribution of Christian forces, reducing the number of churches in some localities and increasing them in others. This cooperative spirit has already accomplished some striking results, thus summarized in a recent report:

"All of the denominations working in Alaska agreed several years ago to allocations of territory; they make readjustments of territory and responsibility as conditions warrant, and they are trying to realize the meaning of the name which their representatives adopted for themselves four years ago, "The Associated Evangelical Churches of Alaska." In Montana, Idaho, Western Washington, Northern California, Utah, and Colorado, where pioneer conditions in good part still continue, councils exist which practically federate the home mission agencies of those states and have already secured a very large measure of efficient cooperation.[7] In Ohio the problems of the decadent country church are receiving joint attention in an effort to discover if county federations will improve matters. In the Hawaiian Islands a desire for closer cooperation is seeking expression. "Denominations do not now, as a rule, begin any new missionary service in the old competitive way by starting in, without reference to what any other denomination is doing. Now, usually through the medium of the office of the Home Missions Council, inquiry is made as to the place of greatest need and the best method of making a beginning; and the approval and fellowship of those already at work are sought."[8]

[7] See Denominational Cooperation in Montana, by G. Clifford Cress, Home Missions Council, New York.

[8] See Annual Report of Home Missions Council, 1923, pp. 113, 114, by Dr. Alfred Williams Anthony, also "Unified Thinking in Home Missions," by Mrs. M. Katharine Bennett.

The following paragraphs, taken from a recent report, illustrate the cooperative efforts of the united Boards in various departments of their work:

"Together the different boards and denominations have done work as one:

"In Porto Rico the Baptists, Congregationalists, Disciples, Methodists, Presbyterians, and United Brethren under the admirable guidance of the Committee on Co-operation in Latin America, have allocated territory so that their churches are not in conflict or competition in any of the towns and villages or on the countryside. Together they maintain the Evangelical Seminary of Porto Rico for the training of a native ministry; for pastors they carry on a correspondence school; and they publish one religious paper for all.

"In Santo Domingo two boards of the Methodist Episcopal Church, two boards of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., and one board of the United Brethren Church maintain a common mission, having one ownership of property, one staff of workers and one purse, administered by the Board of Christian Work in Santo Domingo. This work was begun under the stimulus of the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America.

"In six Government schools for Indian youth, religious work directors are maintained by the payment of money from general women's boards of eight different denominations, which funds are sent to the Home Missions Council.

"The American Protestant Church in the Canal Zone, consisting of four congregations in four different places, though under the American flag, and yet really where foreign missions chiefly operate, has happily come under the legal and ecclesiastical supervision of a committee of the Federal Council, composed of representatives of both Home and Foreign Mission interests.

"Ten women's boards have cooperated through the Council of Women for Home Missions in work among farm and cannery migrants in Italian truck farming communities and canneries employing Poles and Lithuanians. In 1923, the fourth season of the work, six stations in New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania, conducted mostly by undergraduate college girls, were open.

"The Publication Boards of several denominations, acting through the Sunday School Council of Evangelical

Denominations, have worked out a plan of publishing Sunday School lessons in foreign languages, so that one bi-lingual lesson quarterly will serve all denominations. When issuing these lessons, each publishing house calls itself 'The United Religious Press,' and gives its own address."

"As pieces of work done by single denominations, the following may be pointed out: the services in the field of recruiting made possible in experimental ways by the Congregational Home Missionary Society, the Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society, and the Methodist Episcopal Board; the beginning of a Protestant Immigrant Follow-Up through the loan of workers by the New York City Mission Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church and the gift of money by the Department of Work Among Foreign-Born Americans of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church; the editing of the Race Group Studies by the Secretary of the Baptist City Mission Society of New York, and the underwritings of the publication by different denominations; the colportage work among Japanese on the Pacific Coast maintained by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; the preparation of a pamphlet on 'First Steps in Church Building,' by the Secretary of the Executive Committee of Publications of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the Architect-Secretary of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, and also the preparation of a Manual of Church Plans by a Secretary of the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church with the assistance of secretaries and architects of at least a half dozen other boards."

This briefest summary of the work of the Home Missions Council, now only fifteen years old, evidently forecasts a new era in the Home Mission work of American Protestantism.

Equally impressive is the unification of mission effort in foreign lands. Indeed, the whole modern movement for a united Protestantism has received its greatest impetus from the foreign missionary. Foreign Missions has done much for the Church at home but among its greatest contributions has been the rebuke which it has administered to the sectarian spirit of the Church and the catholic temper which it has begun to create. The degree in

which foreign boards are now cooperating is not generally understood. The record of increasing cooperation by the churches in the prosecution of their foreign missionary work constitutes one of the brightest chapters in the story of Church reunion in our modern world.

When the twenty-ninth annual session of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America was held at Atlantic City in 1922, there were in attendance 328 delegates and corresponding members, representing sixty-two boards and societies, practically all the foreign mission boards and societies of the United States and Canada. The functions of this Foreign Missions Conference, according to its constitution, are "to provide for an Annual Conference of the Foreign Missions Boards and Societies of North America; to provide, through its Committees, for the investigation and study of missionary problems; to foster and promote a true science of missions; and 'itself,' to perform directly or through its Committees certain specific work of interest to Boards and Societies participating in the Conference. It is not within the scope of the Conference to consider questions of ecclesiastical faith and order which represent denominational differences." Under this broad definition of its functions, the Conference is, in effect, a clearing-house of foreign missionary information, education, and action, and brings within the knowledge and direction of a single group the united foreign missionary operations of a whole continent. By it, plans for the education in missionary information of all cooperating churches are made; world missionary conferences are inaugurated; a survey of unoccupied territory in foreign lands is conducted, and plans for its most strategic occupation are formulated; financial budgets and cooperative efforts for raising them are discussed; the transfer of missionary work from one Board to another is made possible. In short, the entire foreign missionary work of the churches at home and abroad is actually conducted under this arrangement on a cooperative basis.

The old day of independent and even competitive foreign missionary work has disappeared. The Church is now operating as a single agency for the carrying of the Gospel to foreign lands.[9] Commissions have been sent

[9] For full information, the reader is referred to the Report of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, Twenty-ninth annual session, New York, 25 Madison Avenue.

out for the purpose of studying missionary education in China, India and Africa. These commissions have published reports entitled: "Village Education in India"; "Education in Africa"; and "Christian Education in China."[10] The Foreign Missions Conference has also been able to establish direct relations between missions and governments.[11] It has proved of inestimable service in such emergencies as the famine in China, and the Japanese earthquake, and similar disasters, and cooperates with the Red Cross, the Near East, and other relief organizations.

To provide a method of cooperation between the different national organizations, there has now been created the International Missionary Council,[12] composed of the foreign missionary societies of seventeen countries. This council originated at a conference held in Switzerland in 1920, and subsequent conferences have been held at Lake Mohonk and at Oxford. It proposes to make permanent the international prosecution of the missionary task which was discussed and planned at the World Missionary Council held in Edinburgh in 1910. The International Review of Missions gives full accounts of the program of the International Council.

The effect of these cooperative plans at home are plainly revealed when one surveyed the mission fields themselves. There one discovers great union colleges, medical and theological schools, and publication and printing plants. In China, alone, there are sixty-two schools, colleges and hospitals which are supported by the combined resources of different Mission boards. Everywhere on the Mission Field today, one witnesses this pooling of energy and money, and the spectacle of duplication of effort is rarely to be found. The observer today sees a Church united in its desire and purpose to prosecute, by the wisest and most strategical methods possible, its great task of world evangelization.

In China there was formed, in the winter of 1912–13, an organization known as the China Continuation Committee. This organization, while self-appointed, rendered

[10] See Report Foreign Missions Conference, 1922, p. 57.
[11] Ibid., 1918, pp. 193–246; 1923, pp. 38–42.
[12] Ibid., 1923, pp. 44, 45.

most effective service in the field of cooperation in the different Missions and culminated in the great China Conference held in Shanghai, May, 1922.[13] One result of this conference was the organization of the National Christian Council of China, thoroughly representative of the whole Protestant Chinese movement.[14] "Three great union denominational movements are now well started in China: (1) Anglican, which has taken the form of a General Synod for all China, thus bringing together in one national church organization the churches connected with the Church of England and the American Protestant Episcopal Church. (2) Union of Lutherans in Central China in the form of a General Assembly of the Lutheran Churches of China, whereby almost two-thirds of the communicants connected with Lutheran Missions have united in one common church organization. (3) The formation of a General Assembly of Presbyterian Churches in China, which together with the Congregational Churches promises eventually to result in a United Church of China."[15]

In Japan there have been for some years two cooperative organizations: the Federated Missions of Japan and the Japan Continuation Committee. Japan has long been working on the problem of the reorganization of these national bodies, and succeeded in 1923 in creating the National Christian Council of Japan, as a truly representative central body. Union churches are springing up all over the empire, and the tendency to integration is visible everywhere.[16] These are sample illustrations of the cooperative action which is now taking place all over the Mission Field.[17]

The reunion movement, noticeable elsewhere in the mission fields, is nowhere as strong as in India, where

[13] See "Progress of Church Union and Cooperation in China," by Robert E. Chandler, The Chinese Recorder, September, 1923.

[14] See China Missions Yearbook, 1923.

[15] Quoted from "Christian Occupation of China."

[16] See "The Christian Movement in Japan, Korea, and Formosa."

[17] See, for example, the "Constitution of Alliance of Missionary Societies in British East Africa, Kikuyu, July, 1918," as adopted at the United Conference of Missionaries at Kikuyu, July 26, 1918, and subsequently confirmed by the Home Authorities of the Allied Societies.

the National Missionary Council has been in existence for about eight or nine years. This has held meetings and carried on a large amount of work. It has recently been reorganized and is now known as the National Christian Council of India, Burma, and Ceylon. Today, India unities in one body some 200,000 Christians who formerly belonged to the Congregational, London Missionary Society, Dutch Reformed, Free Church of Scotland, Established Church of Scotland, and Basel Reformed Missions. Representatives of this United Church have recently held a conference, on union with the Presbyterian Church in India, and with the Wesleyans of South India and Ceylon. The South India United Church is also at present negotiating with the Anglican Church in India. If, as seems probable, the negotiations are ultimately successful, the result will amount to a union of all the Christian bodies except the Roman Catholics, in South India, on the basis of the last Lambeth encyclical. This will mean that a real National Indian Church has been formed. Although it will be tolerant of almost every expression of Evangelical opinion and will retain the freedom of development characteristic of Protestantism, its acceptance for substance of the catholic creeds and by its use of the Episcopate, will constitute an experiment in practical Church Union which may be followed in other lands.[18]

When one leaves the mission field, and asks to what degree Church reunion is taking place in Europe and America, the record of progress and achievement may seem less impressive. Yet the general undercurrent and movement is in one direction. It is plain to all penetrating observers of the religious and ecclesiastical life of our time that a new day is dawning in the evolution of our common Christianity. We had a Church which had uniformity without liberty before the Reformation; after the Reformation, Protestantism became multiform, in the first exercise of its freedom. Today, the mind of the Church is bent upon the attainment of a unity which shall preserve and perpetuate within it the ideals of religious freedom.

[18] See articles by J. H. Oldham in the "International Review of Missions," 1921, 1922. See also "Church Union in India," by G. Sherwood Eddy, in "Chinese Recorder," 1919, p. 525; "The India Year Book for 1922"; and the Report of the Joint Committee on Union, April, 1920.

On this road, certain milestones already have been passed.[19] One of them is Church comity. Church comity is not Church unity. But it is on the road to it. The Church can have comity without having unity, but it cannot have unity without having comity. By Church comity is meant the principle of non-interference, of common understanding, the opposite of sectarianism, competition, denominational bigotry. These still exist; but they exist as the relics of a day that is gone. The intelligence and conscience of the Church, as a whole, has risen above them. Church competition has become intolerable. Soon it will be impossible.

But the Church has not only attained to a large measure of Church comity on its way to Church unity. It has advanced to the idea of Church federation. Church federation means more than Church comity. The latter is negative, the former is positive. By comity is meant that churches shall not compete with each other; by federation is meant that together they shall compete against irreligion and immorality, and that the kingdom of evil shall be opposed by the Church of Christ acting unitedly with a common purpose and for a common end.

Church federation has well been defined as "Some form of mutual concordat between the workers of different Christian communions having for its aim a combination of resources, of activities and of influence in certain spheres of Christian endeavour." It does not disturb communion in the full possession of its existing identity, distinctive principles and ministry. It does not raise, much less propose to determine, the underlying questions, upon which the solution of the problem of Church unity depends. Its sphere of jurisdiction, therefore, extends only to those lines of action in which cooperation is possible without compromise of the principles and claims of any communion which is represented within the federation. It does not necessitate, even in appearance, any agreement on questions relating to ministry, creed, or polity. It may even presuppose the indefinite prolongation of the present alignment of Christian bodies. It does not suggest that any one Church is *prima inter pares*. But it does provide a form of practical union for the attainment of modern ends. It leads to something more. For

[19] The reader is referred to "Christianity, Its Principles and Possibilities," Association Press, New York, 1920.

in the prosecution of a common task, these churches come to a unity of understanding, of sympathy, of goodwill which constitutes the spiritual basis of any further unification among them.

Furthermore, Church federation is a good working substitute in the popular mind for Church union that vindicates the Christian character of the Church, and disposes of one of the most frequent and merited reproaches brought against it by the unbelieving mind; "the evidence it affords that Christians are sufficiently agreed in spite of their differences to cooperate, without compromising their convictions, in promoting vital Christian aims; increases the persuasive power of Christian preaching, and it achieves results in the sphere of practical Christianity and of public morality which can be accomplished in no other way." Thus the principle of Church federation, while no real equivalent of Church unity is a means, an indispensable means, to that end. It does not claim "This is all the Church unity we want," or, "This is all the Church unity we can have"; it does not even say "This is Church unity" at all. It does not delay, but rather hastens, the attainment of organic unity. It does not blind men to the need of it; it opens their eyes to see it. It does not beg the questions upon the answer to which Church unity depends; rather, those answers are wrought out of the practical experience of Christian workers, as they can never be argued out in academic discussion or scholastic seclusion.

There is abundant cause for believing that it is only as parishes give up their isolation; cease to think over-much of their own prerogatives; and lend themselves in a self-effacing spirit to the doing together in ever larger groups of imperious tasks, will the spirit be acquired out of which Church unity will grow. It has been self-contemplation, self-absorption, self-admiration, which has obscured the vision. The concern with little peculiarities, the exaltation of factors that divide, above the mighty principles that should unite,—these have kept alive the bitterness of ancient controversies, and have chilled and killed the will to remove the obstacles which prevent the restoration of unity. In that day only, though it be in the midst of social disorder, political corruption, economic injustice, the widespread destitution both of the bread that feeds the body and the bread that nourishes the soul;

and in the face of millions of men by "our neglect unfit to see His face," when the cry goes forth from the hearts of all Christians, "Bring forth the royal diadem and crown Him Lord of all,"—will Church unity become a living fact. That consummate blessing for the Christian Church will be won only by commensurate prayer and consecration on the part of its whole membership.

This puts us in a position to measure the significance of the Church federation movement in modern America. Beginning hardly a score of years ago, it has spread all over the land, until, in some sections of the country, the churches of few cities of any considerable size are not united in some form of local federation. These federations perform a variety of useful tasks. They plan union services; cooperate in forms of inter-Church religious education; they take a united religious census of the community to discover its unchurched families; they perform useful civic service; present a united front against all forms of community evil, and voice the conscience of the Church, as a whole, on matters of vital Christian interest.

This significant movement in the evolution of the new Protestantism has now attained to national dimensions with an established clearing house for its ideas in the organization known as "The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America." This has well been called the first attempt to bring the Churches of Christ in America "into definite and continuing cooperative relationships. It means a formal union of Protestant churches through the appointment by them of official representatives upon a central body for mutual conference, for coordination of efforts and for united endeavour."[20] In the plan for such a Federal Council, formed at an Interchurch Conference on Federation held in New York City in 1905, the object stated was: "to manifest the essential oneness of the Christian Churches of America in Jesus Christ as their divine Lord and Saviour and to promote the spirit of fellowship and cooperation among them." By its constitution the Council is to serve as an agency "for the prosecution of work that can better be done in union than in separation." Each Church that cooperates in the Council maintains its entire internal autonomy. All

[20] See "Churches Allied for Common Tasks," Federal Council, New York, 1921. See also the Federal Council Annual Report, 1922.

agree to work together for common ends. In this way, an official union of the evangelical Churches of Christ in America was consummated "which, in theory at least, went beyond anything that had been heretofore secured in the history of Protestantism."

The first meeting of the Council was convened in Philadelphia in 1908. Since then, the Council has grown steadily in strength and in influence. Today, it is the authoritative voice and conscience of a united Protestantism in America. Its third quadrennial meeting was held in Boston in December, 1920. "Here were gathered upwards of four hundred representatives of thirty communions, officially elected by (them) to be their spokesmen when the cooperative work of previous years was to be reviewed in a common council, and plans made for that work in the future. There were present, in addition, over a hundred corresponding members, including representatives of the interdenominational agencies carrying on the missionary and educational work of the churches. What was considered during those days together? Not differences of theological view or of ecclesiastical polity but unmistakable common tasks."[21] Topics like these were taken up: How can the principles of Jesus be applied more effectively in the field of industry? How can the message of the Church be carried to all sections of our heterogeneous American population? How can the united missionary work of the Church in the non-Christian world be done more efficiently? How can the churches cooperate more closely to secure a real international brotherhood? How can the conscience of America be stimulated to care for the starving millions of Europe? How can race antagonisms be allayed by the ministry of the Church? How can the task of religious education be better performed by the churches? These were the questions which were debated, and solutions to them earnestly sought.

The significance of having a general headquarters that brings the united mind of the Church to bear upon these common problems will escape no one. But the Federal Council does more than discuss and advise. It acts. It has a record of definite achievement, and plans that call for a continuous enlargement of its aims. Through its Commission on Evangelism, the leaders of the cooperating

[21] "Churches Allied for Common Tasks," Federal Council, p. 16.

churches, in conference, agreed on a common program of evangelism. It is not unreasonable to trace to this community of effort, the fact that the year 1922 recorded the largest number of accessions to Church membership of any single year in the history of the Church in America. A unified program of Christian education is another objective. A national conference on this subject has been held with a view to discovering the best methods of cooperation between existing organizations in meeting this grave responsibility. Getting behind a single comprehensive program of religious education is the only way in which Protestantism can solve this urgent problem.

The department of Social Service of the Council maintains a Bureau of Research in which expert study of industrial and economic problems is carried on, and the results placed at the disposal of the churches. Never before has an equally intelligent effort been made to equip the churches to speak unitedly and wisely on the application of Christian teaching to social problems. Its work at this point alone would fully justify the existence of the Federal Council. The volume, "The Church and Industrial Reconstruction," edited by Rev. Samuel McCrea Cavert, one of the secretaries of the Council, is a fine illustration of the influence of the Federal Council in promoting a courageous, yet sane outlook on the whole subject of the relation of the Church to the national life.

The Council has also gone ahead with its plan of promoting conferences all over the land between employers and employees, and it has served "as a connecting link between the Church and great social agencies" like the American Red Cross and the Department of Public Health of the United States government. Recently, a Commission on the Church and Race Relations has been established. Southern leaders, both black and white, have cooperated to bring the united influence of the churches to bear on the promotion of a program for racial justice and goodwill. "The present world-wide interest in disarmament and in international cooperation has set the work previously done by the Federal Council for the abolition of war into bold relief. Long a united agency for the churches in their attitude toward peace, the Council has now become, even in the judgment of the outside world, one of the most effective agents in the world working for

a better day in the relations of nations to one another."[22] "Lord Riddell, the distinguished press officer of the British delegation at the Washington Conference, declared in a public gathering: 'Since coming to America, I have been particularly impressed by the work of the churches. Their campaign of educational publicity through the Federal Council of the churches has been one of the most effective pieces of work in behalf of peace that I have seen.' The Federal Council is engaged, not in a spasmodic effort, but in a persistent campaign for world accord. It is now attempting with unabated zeal to induce the United States to participate in permanent organized cooperation for world peace and human welfare. It is definitely committed to continued and unremitting activity until a peace-system takes the place of competitive armament and recurring war." In short, through close association with the National Government maintained by its Washington office, and through its relations with the churches and organizations of other lands, the Federal Council has now become one of the generally recognized agencies of international good-will. And, if its past record of increasing efficiency can be maintained in the coming years, the extent and value of its future work can hardly be over-estimated. Even this brief and superficial summary shows that, at last, the Protestant churches of America have a working organization in the Federal Council for the promotion and attainment of common Christian tasks.

When all this has been said, however, it is to be frankly admitted that the Federal Council does not pretend to undertake the task of Church unity in its final form. It is based upon the principle of federating existing churches, not of seeking to unite them into a single Church. Each Church is left intact and unchanged. The separate churches remain separate in doctrine and polity. All discussion of points on which Christians differ is avoided. Only tasks on which all churches can agree are discussed and undertaken. In its broader aspects, therefore, the problem is left just where it was before: with this difference, however, that the spirit of sympathy and of understanding between the churches, on which Church unity itself must be based, enormously increases

[22] See "Christian Unity at Work"—Pamphlet issued by the Federal Council.

after the churches have engaged together in the doing of this work in common.

The question arises, is any further degree of Church unity possible or even desirable? If churches that call themselves Christian can cooperate in doing work admittedly Christian, is not this all that we have either the right or the need to expect? Is there any hope that the churches will ever agree on matters of Church government, Church worship, on Creed, and on Sacrament? Would the Church be any better off if such agreement could be reached? And if so, how?

As these questions have been asked, and the answer to them sought, one thing has become perfectly clear: the futility of ever expecting uniformity of Christian belief and of Christian practice. The Church was united before 1520. No one outside of Rome wants such unity again. The uniformity which outlaws liberty, it is safe to say, will not come back again. Better, diversity, as we know it today, with liberty than uniformity without it. Better, the sacrifice of catholicity than the loss of conscience. Moreover, if it were attainable, uniformity is not desirable. The religious psychologist understands as well as the biologist that uniformity is not a sign of life, but of death. A certain diversity in a group is a sign of vitality. Variety connotes richness, spontaneity, life. The very fact that Protestantism takes on so many forms indicates that its principle is very much alive.

There is another fact to be reckoned with,—the persistence of ideas peculiar to a few denominations. Walk about Zion, and no weakening of denominational loyalty is discoverable. Survey the entire field of corporate Christianity and no tendency to surrender denominational principles will be found. Repeated experiments in Church union which involved a surrender or even a compromise or obscuring of denominational issues, have resulted in friction and failure. If anything is clear, it is that any forced union of churches, based on a surrender of distinctive principles, is foredoomed to failure. There must then be some deep spiritual justification for the persistence of factors like these in the corporate religious consciousness. To say that this is due solely to unregenerate human nature, or to the ecclesiastical mind, so hopelessly obstinate and recalcitrant, is an easy retort for one on the outside, but it really does not do justice to the religious

ideas in question. Certain of these ideas, as we have seen, do perish of themselves. But where they show no signs of loosing their hold, it must not be laid to the unreasoning persistence of ecclesiastical shibboleths, or the equally unreasoning resistance of a bigoted theological mind. It can only mean that each separate body of Christians has somehow discerned, understood, preserved and perpetuated some aspect of the Christian faith either in its personal or corporate form, which is not only true for them, but is an essential and an integral part of that higher and corporate expression of Christian Truth for which we wait and to which we aspire.

Thus the word to use to describe the conception of Church unity, adequately and beautifully, is not uniformity, but comprehension. It is a unity in which each Church seeks not to supplant but to supplement the others. The Church to which we look forward is not one in which the distinctions characteristic of the different bodies of Christian peoples shall be repudiated, or cut down to an irreducible minimum. Rather it shall be one in which provision shall be made for them all, to which they all will make their peculiar contributions; in fact, never shall any of them express its full individual meaning until they all become a part of this completed whole.

In a diocesan address some years ago, Bishop Brewster of Connecticut thus enunciated the conception of Church unity based upon the principle of comprehension: "True unity is essential and vital. It is the unity in diversity of an organism where the several parts are developed each in a freedom which the more fully ministers to the rich life of the whole. It is a unity living and free, embracing distinctions, differences of administrative opinion and mode of worship, but all made concordant because taken up into the large harmony of the whole in the key of a common faith and the common life of the one spirit in one body. The constructive genius of John Wesley seems to have conceived of the inclusion of great organizations within the organism of one body. This to me seems by no means inconceivable. If I hope for some such organic unity that shall not be dissevered from the life of the past and yet, shall take hold of and enfold the life of the future, it is not by the method of some one communion seeking to absorb the rest. I dream rather of the seeking, by all, of some common basis of

faith and order; the foregoing by all, for that end of things of human ordering and preference; not insisting, I mean, upon such things for others; a general return to that common standing-ground, to the old and well-tried, the great and simple things of God in Christ that do not dissever but unite men as at the first, in one Lord, one faith, one baptism." Upon such a statement of the principle underlying any advance from the idea of Federation to that of Unity must proceed, most thinking men are agreed. The question is, can such a unity be achieved? Is such an ideal a practicable one? No one is blind to its difficulty: one asks only, Is it feasible at all?

That this ideal is possible of attainment, if not in the form in which we conceive it today, then in some other and better, is proved by the patience, the persistence and the passion with which the task is absorbing the attention of able Church leaders today all over the world. No one can ignore the fact that this cause is gaining momentum every day. One may himself be outside this movement; he may eye it askance, be as critical and skeptical of its success as he will, but its depth and reality he cannot doubt. It gains steadily in strength and scope.

Christians are simply unable to believe that the present alignment of the churches is permanent; that the present position of Protestantism is final. Recognizing that the mission of Protestantism, thus far, in witnessing to the principle of liberty is of divine origin and importance, they feel that now this principle is firmly in its grasp, the Church must proceed to a higher and truer integration than it has ever known. They complain that the divisions of the Church are not only one of the greatest hindrances to its progress and to its service to the world, but that they are a reproach to those who bear the Christian name and a dishonour to Him who prayed for His disciples "that they may be one."[23] They look forward, therefore, to a United Church in Christ in the world, which has incorporated within itself all the truth back of those different ideas to which in their history the different bodies of Christians have borne historic witness. Wherever one looks at the religious world today, at home or abroad, the ferment of this effort is at work. The mind

[23] St. John 17:11.

and the conscience of the Church seems set on finding a solution of this problem of church unity.

Alone, the Church of Rome remains outside of this movement. The time not only has not come, it is not in sight, when Rome will take any part or even an interest in it. The position of the Roman Church remains, today, what it has always been. There is, there can be, but one Church; it is the Church created by Christ Himself who put into the hands of St. Peter the keys of Heaven and of Hell and deliberately declared that on the person and work of this one apostle He would build His Church. The Church of Rome, it declares, has come down to us through the ages, one and indivisible, and its Head today is the Shepherd of men. All Christians, from its own point of view, are really members of Rome; some of them schismatic members, but members, none the less. Unity to the Church of Rome means only the recognition by all Christians of what *de facto* they are. The problem of Church unity is just as simple as that. In other respects, there is no problem. The only change that needs to be made is to induce non-Roman Christians to accept a situation which already exists. The most enlightened pontiffs refuse to view Church unity in any other way. They will take part in no movement which looks in any other direction.

Everywhere else, however, outside the great historic Hierarchy, and especially in Protestant Europe and America, the current is setting strongly in the direction of finding a platform of principles that shall bring unity to the Church while safeguarding its liberty. Proposals, experiments, conferences, are taking place on all sides. Tentative plans are under consideration, most of them immature or premature, and destined to fall before a Church conscience that is jealous to preserve its dearly won treasures. No wonder progress is slow. The memories of the sacrifices by which liberty was won are too powerful ever to be stampeded into rushing into reunion without exercising care to see that what to them is most precious shall be safeguarded and secured. Nevertheless, steady has been the creep of the tide that is lifting the churches above their separatism to a higher level of comprehension and union. A mere synopsis of this varying movement cannot fail to impress the imagination. The interested reader is referred to "A Compilation of Proposals for

Christian Unity," published by the Continuation Committee of the World Conference on Faith and Order. Merely as a study in religious psychology, as an intellectual and spiritual effort to get to the bottom of ideas, to reconcile and bring them together in some higher synthesis, these papers are of extreme interest. Of course, they are more than that. They are serious proposals, practical plans.

People who have not followed closely this current of Church thought and interest are unaware how much headway it has made. It is impossible here to tell the full story. The line of movements which have resulted, or bid fair to result, in the amalgamation of Church bodies is already long, and it is constantly lengthening. "In Canada, the Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians have reached the final stage of union, and Methodists and Anglicans are appointing Commissions to confer. In England, members of the Church of England and of the Baptist, Congregational, Methodist, Moravian and Presbyterian churches have made remarkable progress toward unification in their conferences.[24] In Australia, Anglicans, Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians are discussing combination seriously. Informal discussions are going on in the West Indies. The Church of Scotland and the United Free Church of Scotland have almost completed their reunion. The Northern and Southern bodies of the Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptists in the United States are engaged in active negotiations. Two of the largest bodies of Lutherans in the United States have united under the name of the United Lutheran Church of America. In Egypt, members of the Church of England and the Greek Orthodox, Coptic, Syrian, Orthodox, Armenian and Presbyterians churches are continuing hopeful conferences. In Ireland, the Presbyterians and the Church of Ireland are considering reunion. The recognition by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Holy Orthodox Eastern churches of the validity of Anglican orders is a long step toward reunion between the Eastern Orthodox churches and the Anglican Communion. The Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Old Catholic churches of Europe are making overtures to each other, and the relations between the Eastern Orthodox

[24] See report of the Joint Conference on Church Unity at Lambeth Palace, 1922.

and the Armenian and Coptic churches are closer." The mere reading of this record is convincing testimony that the trend of modern ecclesiastical opinion is evidently in one direction.

Mention must be made of two recent experimental plans in Church reunion in the United States. One of them,[25] inaugurated by the Presbyterians for the organic union of the Evangelical churches of America, calls for a common name: "The United Churches of Christ in America," and a Council, on which each constituent Church shall be represented, the functions of which shall be to unify the work of the United Churches, effect a consolidation of its missionary activities, and pass upon any matters of mutual concern to be submitted to it. This plan, which is to be put into operation when ratified by six denominations, was adopted by the Reformed Church in the United States at its General Synod in May, 1923, and by the Congregational Churches at their National Council in October, 1923. Of interest, also, are the recent negotiations between the Episcopal and the Congregational Churches and their endeavour to arrive at some plan of ordination for the clergy, qualifying them to act in either Church, which would meet the requirements and do justice to the historical position of both churches. The proposed concordat was presented to the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 1922; but was not adopted as presented, and the proposed plan will not be carried into effect. Yet, the Episcopal Church by the action taken made canonical provision which will enable its bishops to give to ordained ministers of other churches an Episcopal Commission.[26]

Reunion between churches agreed on the fundamental questions of the nature of the Church and its ministry is one thing. Another, and a far more difficult thing, is the problem of arriving at any basis of union between churches which are not agreed on these subjects. If we leave out of account the Roman Church, and still further, limit our attention to the churches of Western Europe and of America, reflection will confirm the state-

[25] See Report of the Interchurch Council on Organic Union, Philadelphia, 1920.

[26] The Canon as adopted may be found in Appendix XX, pp. 696–697, Journal of the General Convention, 1922.

ment that ever since the days of the Reformation, two traditions have run side by side which are incorporated in two types of church life and thought. The controlling purpose behind the one, has been to depart, no more than necessity compelled, from the Roman Catholic idea; to preserve, as far as possible, an historical continuity in the conception formed of the Church, its worship and its ministry by each age. This we call the catholic tradition. On the other hand, there has been the conviction that a break, absolute and entire, with the Roman Catholic past is necessary to the attainment of full religious freedom: that new ideas of worship and the ministry, based on Scripture and not on extra-Biblical ecclesiastical development, must create for us a Free Church, no longer in subjection to unwarranted historical precedents, but freely responsive to prophetic conviction and interpretation. This, we call the protestant tradition. These two traditions, in journeying along parallel courses for five hundred years, have produced two types of churches. Both started from a common idea: that the Church, however human the elements that compose it, is of divine origin and has a divine nature.

But that common idea proceeded to work itself out in two sharply contrasting theories of the Church.[27] For the one, Church continuity is to be found in the continuity of its institutions; according to the other, in the continuity of faith, of evangelical experience in the heart of the believer; for the one, power and authority in the Church is vested in its rulers and delegated to those below; according to the other, power and authority are vested in the people and delegated to those who are above. For the one, the Church, above all things, is an outward and visible entity, authenticated in history by its apostolic priesthood, an organic body apart from which no churches, rightly so named but only other Christian bodies or communions exist. According to the other, the Church is, above all things, an invisible and spiritual order, authenticated in history by the perpetual faith of Christ's people, so that wherever the Church is, faith is; and wherever faith is not, there is no Church.

[27] The reader is referred to the writer's paper, "The Historical Approach to Church Unity," in the volume, "Approaches towards Church Unity," pp. 74 ff., from which these paragraphs have been taken.

In a word, the one is the Anglican Catholic, the other the Protestant idea of the Church. Divergence of respective emphasis upon the priestly and prophetic ideas of the ministry is responsible for whatever is distinctive in the two great historic Christian positions. In the one case, the primary place is given to ecclesiastical institutions, which leads to "the conception of ordination, not as the recognition, but as the bestowal of an office, and therewith, of the 'charisma' or gift of grace needed to sustain it; and the strict requirement that men shall not take upon themselves the discharge of functions in the Church to which they have not been formally commissioned." In the other case, the supreme and determining principle is simply the Gospel: it is by the heart of faith that the Spirit is received; Christians are the true "extension of the Incarnation";[28] and the Christian community is to be sought primarily, not in any outward and visible ecclesiastical organization, but in the purely spiritual company of souls, begotten and constituted by the Gospel.

Now these two ideas also have been incorporated in two co-existent, parallel organizations which refuse to amalgamate because there is no underlying spiritual apprehension on the part of either of the religious value, importance and indispensability of the truth to which the other bears witness and of which it is a visible embodiment. Morever, there is no likelihood that either will disappear. The Catholic idea is certainly here to stay, but so is the Protestant. The ministries of the various Protestant denominations quite legitimately point to the witness of the souls they shepherd and exclaim with St. Paul, "the seal of our apostleship are ye in the Lord." Regenerate souls, to their thinking, constitute a validity of the Spirit which transcends the validity of outward continuity or a visible ordination. If both are here to stay, the only hope of reunion lies in a spiritual apprehension by the proponents and believers of each in the truth for which the other stands.

Yet such an appreciation by the Protestant of the Catholic Idea of the Church, and conversely by the Catholic of the Protestant Idea, is just what is most noticeably lacking at the present time. The average Protestant,

[28] "Foundations," The Principle of Authority, pp. 382, 404, 405.

though he be educated in Church history and even a trained expert in the development of Church theory for the past two thousand years, looks upon the Catholic Idea of the Church as an unscriptural, an unspiritual and an unwarranted expression in external and material forms, of the "pure Gospel." To him, it is an obstruction in the path of Christianity, which must be swept away by the rising tides of Spirituality and left behind, with the Past to which it clings, before the Church can hope to win the assent and loyalty of intelligent and enlightened modern men. The Catholic Idea of the Church is to him a vestigial survival of Mediævalism in our modern world. It is an anachronism which cannot last. On the other hand, it is difficult to find a Catholic who sees an historic or spiritual basis for the Church in the Protestant position. He finds there much that is "true" in individual Christian experience. He discovers all the marks of a genuine Christian piety, an undoubted Christian faith, an admirable ardour for the propagation of the Gospel. But there is to him no sign in all this of an ecclesia, a divinely instituted and authenticated visible community which is the very Body of Christ and Organ of His Spirit.

Thus, an advanced education in still higher religious values alone can cause the adherents of these two Ideas to coalesce and point the way to their final merging in the truly unified Christian Church. This higher religious education will open the eyes of the Protestant on a more sympathetic approach to the Catholic position; and of the Catholic to the recognition in some measure of the validity of the Protestant witness. Once a beginning is made, together they will continue to mount to the higher Truth which includes them both.

"Each of the two great Christian types has need to be at once the scholar and teacher of the other. The final unity (which must assuredly be wrought out in God's good time) will come not by compromise, but by comprehension. Truth is a synthesis, an elimination by the reconciliation of differences, and the claims of conflicting 'authorities' must be harmonized by being included and justified, not negated, in the ultimate whole." So-called Catholic religion must include, if it would be perfect, the so-called Protestant idea. At its best, this stands for personal religion, for the spiritual freedom of the

individual, and for his answerableness in the last resort to his Maker alone; for the truth of evangelism and the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. "The Catholicism of the future cannot afford to disregard the truths of the Protestant witness, and must to a certain extent reinterpret and revalue (without abandoning) its institutionalism in the light of them." It will recognize that all Christian communities, animated by the Spirit of Christ, belong, as well as itself, to the Church of Christ; it will recognize the spiritual validity of any Protestant pastor as a true and godly minister of the Lord, although it might be difficult or impossible to recognize him, in the Catholic sense and for Catholics apart from episcopal ordination, as a qualified minister of the Sacraments; it will stress the faith of the believer as well as the responsibility of the ministrant; and it will view the Sacraments, themselves, as one, and not the sole, means of the impartation of the full sacramental grace of Christ.

On the other hand, Protestantism with its emphasis upon personal faith, personal authority, personal responsibility, personal religion, in its growth will arrive at an appreciation of the importance of the Catholic point of view. It will grasp the necessity of institutionalism, "that rites and sacraments, are neither dead forms, nor illogical excrescences upon a religion, otherwise wholly spiritual, but themselves spirit and life. So, again, of the witness of Catholicism to the glory of Churchmanship, the sense of spiritual kinship and unity, to the idea of worship, as prior in religion to that of edification—" these "represent elements of historic religion which neither Protestantism nor the universal Church of the future can afford to lose." It is here that Protestantism is weak today. Its sense of churchmanship and solidarity, of universality, of compactness, of institutionalism, needs to be strengthened.

Evidently, an elimination, by reconciliation, of such obstinate differences, will take time, much time. But that a beginning of the process has been made, no one can doubt. Nor can it be doubted that if it is followed up with patience and passion, with humility and with courage, some ultimate solution of this deepest spiritual problem that the cause of Church unity has to face will be found. The desire to do so is alike active in those who are custodians of the Catholic tradition, and in those who main-

tain the validity of the Protestant idea. They no longer stand lined up against and shouting defiance at each other. Rather, they have begun to meet together and talk together, in an earnest endeavour to understand, at its true worth, the other's position.

As witness to the reality of the desire to find a common basis of understanding, and to realize a common sympathy and spirit of oneness in things that are called Christian, the Protestant Episcopal Church of America years ago proposed the holding of a World Conference of Faith and Order, inclusive of all churches that make the common, historic Christian confession. The preliminary work for the holding of this conference is nearly complete. The Conference, itself, the first of its kind, will doubtless be held within a few years. Whatever else it may accomplish, it will be a dramatic witness to a deep spiritual hope, and focus men's minds, as never before, on this great goal of Christian aspiration.

The most notable recent contribution of the Church of England to the cause of Christian unity is the "Appeal to all Christian People from the Bishops, assembled in the Lambeth Conference of 1920," with which every Christian should be familiar. It closes with these words: "The spiritual leadership of the Catholic Church in days to come, for which the world is manifestly waiting, depends upon the readiness with which each group is prepared to make sacrifices for the sake of a common fellowship, a common ministry, and a common service to the world. We place this ideal, first and foremost, before ourselves and our own people. We call upon them to make the effort to meet the demands of a new age with a new outlook. To all other Christian people whom our words may reach, we make the same appeal. We do not ask that any one Communion should consent to be absorbed in another. We do ask that all should unite in a new and great endeavour to recover and to manifest to the world the unity of the Body of Christ for which He prayed." All who have insight can read in the hearts of many who were reared in the Protestant tradition, a new desire to understand and to appropriate certain spiritual values, embodied in the Church from which they came forth, to maintain the cause of religious freedom. This is no indication of weakening in their allegiance to the essential Protestant position. It would be loss and not

gain if there were any. But there has at least appeared above the horizon of men's thoughts inklings of the fact that without loss or compromise, there may be united with this allegiance to the essential Protestant position, an historical perspective, a recovery of spiritual symbolism, a deeper interpretation of the Sacraments, and a more catholic idea of the Church, by which its ministry to our modern world will be enriched and ennobled. Prophecies must necessarily be vague and are often unjustified, but the prediction is here advanced that those, both of the Catholic and Protestant tradition who have set their faces in this direction and their hands to this task, are laying the foundation of that Church of the future which will better meet the total need of men than any Church which the world has yet known.

At no point has the Church in our modern world seemed more justly to merit reproach than by its continued division, and its perpetuation of sectarian and denominational ideas. It is hoped, however, that a candid review of the whole subject presented here may serve somewhat to temper this judgment. Church unity depends, first of all, on a final and fundamental synthesis of the two principles of liberty and union. And centuries may be required, both in our political and ecclesiastical world, before this synthesis can be achieved. Church unity further depends upon the discovery of an underlying principle on which, without doing violence to the genius of either, both Catholic and Protestant conceptions of the Church can agree. A way also must be found by which the different denominational ideas, each precious in itself and tested out by centuries of spiritual experience, may be conserved by being integrated in a larger whole. A survey of the Church in our modern world justifies the claim that this study is being undertaken in deep reverence, charity, and hope. As one ponders this record, the feeling of impatience will be replaced by a truer sentiment of appreciation and confidence. In the meantime, the old sectarian rivalries are on the wane. Taking their place is a new conscience which is fast federating the churches in the practical field of Christian endeavour as Christians the world over await and labour for the consummation of the final unity of the Church.

Chapter X

CHURCH LOYALTY

These chapters have been written to little purpose if they have not left the impression, or even led up to the conviction, that the Church, in spite of all imperfections in its organization and witness, is still an indispensable agent for the promotion of the welfare, alike of the individual and of society. Those who possess an antecedent experience of the faith of Jesus which makes them sure that no other Gospel is at all adequate to the needs of men, have never doubted the Church, and have never questioned their own relation to it. To them, despite all drawbacks, all failures, all disappointing shortcomings, the Church still enshrines the one Truth necessary to individual and social well-being. Another and a different question concerns them: How can the Church's work be made more effective, its life more pure, its witness more compelling?

Even if the approach is not made from this standpoint of long-acquired Christian experience, but from a careful analysis of the problems of our modern world, and of the way in which the Church either is meeting them or is equipped by its constitution and commission to meet them, it is hard to see how a man of truly reverent and earnest mind can escape the conviction that the Christian Church has a powerful claim upon him. If it be true (1) that "we have no record of a civilization which long endured which did not have [a] religious setting for its [morals], nor of any one which endured long after this setting was dissolved,"[1] and (2) that the Church is the only institution in our modern world which makes the teaching of religion its sole concern, evidently criticism of its present undeniable shortcomings will not dislodge the Church from its position.

Indeed, even slight reflection upon the service which

[1] Ellwood, "Reconstruction of Religion," p. 35.

the Church is rendering and is capable of rendering humanity "at the cross-roads" which it has now reached on its long pilgrimage, causes a fair mind to grow increasingly impatient over the pitiful superficiality of some of these criticisms.[2] Too often, they are random speculations of the ill-informed or the unwarranted strictures of those without real appreciation of some of the deepest interests of life. Even when these charges have a basis in fact, the question arises whether a higher conception of loyalty would not discount them and moderate these exacting demands for changes of policy and method. The relative subordination of personal opinion and personal preference here urged does not involve any infringement of the right to private judgment, nor the obligation to utter its findings. On the contrary, the Church has no greater need than for men who are discontented with the existing order. It needs the infusion of fresh blood.[3] Provision should be made to prevent inbreeding and release it from the grip of convention. Those very men and women of Christian convictions and religious feelings who refuse the Church their fellowship and continue to criticize its failures from the outside are needed on the inside. The Church is entitled to the active cooperation and the constructive aid of all who believe in the paramount importance of the work which it is seeking to do. In the practical emergency constituted by the present critical conditions in our modern world, it is asking the help of all who long for the Kingdom of Heaven to come on earth. In great longing it waits to learn if this outside multitude of earnest-minded men and women will be capable of this high form of courage: the courage to fall into line, to refuse to allow partial defects and blemishes to release them from all responsibility. These are big and burning and pivotal

[2] See Willard L. Sperry, "Disciplines of Liberty," p. 149.

[3] We may recall the words of Mill: "If all were to desert the Church who put a large and liberal construction on its terms of communion, or who would wish to see those terms widened, the national provision for religious teaching and worship would be left utterly to those who take the narrowest, the most literal, and purely textual view of the formularies. Therefore, if it were not an impertinence in me to tender advice in such a matter, I should say, let all who conscientiously can remain in the Church. A church is far more easily improved from within than from without." Quoted in Drake, op. cit., p. 174.

times when concerted action is essential and when everybody counts. All who are eager for righteousness to prevail, justice to come, brotherhood to triumph, are summoned to pull their own weight at least; to contribute freely of their manhood and their convictions, and to decline to allow lesser matters to outweigh the larger issues that tremble in the balance. The Church today appeals for the loyalty of all men everywhere as never before.

Of course it is not so hard for some to give this loyalty as it is for others. That is only to say that the distance which separates the Church as it is from the Church that particular men need and desire is greater in some cases than in others. When this gap of unsatisfactoriness is the greatest, the test of loyalty is most severe. It is little short of tragedy when a college-trained man or woman is forced to decide his duty toward a church which, in almost every respect, falls far short of serving his intellectual and spiritual needs. Yet this situation is by no means uncommon. Born and trained, it may be, in a narrow social and ecclesiastical environment, a totally different intellectual and social experience is acquired in college. When such a graduate goes back to the place of his childhood, he finds himself wholly out of sympathy with the entire background of his previous life. The question what to do becomes a painful one.

Here is an actual description by a recent college graduate of her situation: "I am finding my problems even bigger than I anticipated. I don't want to be a small woman in a small town. I don't want to be another Carol Kennicott, but I'm afraid that I shall become both. My family felt that I had been away a long time and wanted me at home for a year, so here I am, teaching in the High School and desperately lonely, in spite of the fact that I am at home. . . . First, our little church is narrow theologically, and socially, even more narrow. The minister 'elocutes' eloquently, but so far as I have been able to discover, he seldom says anything. A Sunday School teacher asks me why it is that educated people aren't in the Church, and then answers the question herself by saying that it is because they believe in evolution and not in the Bible. I feel like a hypocrite attending services from which I feel that I get nothing and by silence, appearing to sanction beliefs and opinions that are at direct

variance with my own. But I can't . . . have people believing that 'educated people are not in the Church.' This winter, there will be a 'revival,' and I'll be expected to attend all the meetings and go around asking people if they are Christians . . . and I can't. I don't believe in revivals. I think they upset people emotionally and that the persons 'converted' in a revival begin to backslide before the evangelist is out of the town. Last winter the revival lasted for six weeks; all the town went. . . . The school children went out night after night until eleven or later, were so frightened . . . that they couldn't sleep after they got home, and, of course, did no work in school. And I, a school teacher, am expected to support a revival of that sort. How can I? And how can't I? . . . If they would only sing hymns, I could enjoy the music,—if they kept somewhere near the tune. But they sing jazzy songs and the service is without dignity and meaning. I've gone faithfully for a month and only once have I got anything from the service."

This statement is given not only because it is such an accurate one, but also because it is so typical. It is often forgotten that the Church today, as many know it, is not the church, with an educated minister, and somewhat adequate resources for worship and service, but the church described so exactly in this letter. And the questions, "How can I? How can't I?" tersely sum up the seemingly impossible alternative that confronts many earnest minds.

Without doubt, loyalty here is subjected to a very severe test. Only a mind both discriminating and courageous can successfully meet it. Yet precisely such loyalty must be shown if the Church problem of this hard type is ever to be solved. If those who have the insight and knowledge which alone are equal to remedying them are so repelled by the defects of the Church as to forsake it, the outlook is, indeed, a forbidding one. There seems to be no other course open this side of Pharisaism than for such people to take the Church as they find it and make their influence felt in these new directions. With patience, courage and good-nature new ideals can be created and congregations soundly converted to new standards. This cannot be done by censorious fault-finding, nor any assumption of superior intellectuality or training, but it can be done by the influence of one's own personality and the unconscious contribution of one's own life. In

fact, it is to be doubted if college-trained men and women can by searching find many higher or more difficult forms of human service than that presented by such a situation. It will call for all the resolution they possess; they will find scope for the application of all the principles gained from their studies in psychology or sociology; it will tax all their resources of faith and courage. This exercise of discrimination between the essential things for which the Church stands and their disappointing exhibition or illustration in practice; this determined fidelity where such loyalty is only too rare, will, by means of certain radiant and irresistible influences that travel in its wake, set currents in motion able to transform the religious life of any such community. It is a high enterprise. No one would select it of his own free choice. But neither ought one to decline it, if the necessity is laid upon him to undertake it.

In most cases, however, the test to which loyalty is put is not nearly so severe, nor is the self-denial necessary for church cooperation nearly so great. Of course, hosts of other people find being loyal not difficult at all. The dismay that would be hard for them to overcome lies in the thought of what their lives would be without the Church. Probably few of the ardent critics of the Church have fairly faced this same question. After all, what would they do without it? We are so accustomed to take the Church for granted as part of the life going on around us, the sound of its gospel, its ministry, its music and its message, that we never stop to think that it might all be lost to us. Going to church may be a dull business, but not having a church to go to would surely be duller. It would also be a dangerous business. A proper realization of what the total loss of the Church out of our life would mean would cause many people to overcome their lethargy, lay aside their indifference, and replace their present attitude of detachment and absenteeism with positive forms of church loyalty. As it is, it is probable that we have witnessed the extreme of the reaction from institutional religion. The minds of men are turning once more in faith and loyalty to the Church in our modern world.

One of the forms which this increased sense of loyalty will assume is the adoption of a tone of hope and of opti-

mism in speaking of the Church. The Church has suffered immeasurably by the adverse or contemptuous talk of its own people. Ministers, themselves, are often to blame in this respect. If a business man should talk down his business in the way that many ministers disparage the Church, they would not have a business much longer than such ministers have a church. Church members also are to blame. When church people go about bemoaning the condition of Zion, what can be expected of people who are not Zionists? If a theological professor feels no impropriety in giving a lecture on "The Failure of the Church," what is the man to think who is not a theologian? If the talk of the man or woman in the pew about the Church is always in a minor key, how is the man or woman in the street to feel drawn to it? A loyal friend of the Church will not be blind to its defects, but he will not advertise them in public any more than he would the faults of any other friend. Also, he will exercise some care to whom he confides his misgivings. When he finds himself in the company of people who have "no use" for the Church, he will not help to confirm them in their impression that the Church is out-worn and out-grown by the utterance of any careless pessimism of his own.

As a matter of fact, there is much to be said for the Church, and church people are the ones who ought to know how and to whom to say it. As things are today, the Church needs to be talked up, instead of being talked down. Anyone who has decided convictions in regard to its work and meaning will not lack for occasions when he can speak a word for the Church with good conscience and with good results. The pity is that the friends of the Church too seldom make good use of their opportunities to champion its cause. A fresh tone of optimism and hope would do the Church a world of good. The one burning question which is asked by everyone who thinks that the Church has seen its best days is: "Where are the nine?" To all intents and purposes, the nine are just where they have always been.

The question takes it too much for granted that every human being has reached the stage of appreciating to the full his privilege of worshipping God in company with his fellows; whereas some people do not wish to worship God at all, and others prefer to worship God, if at all, by themselves. There never was a time in the history of

the world when ten lepers out of ten have returned to glorify God. After every justifiable subtraction has been made, there never was a time when the Church was able to command the loyalty and affection and support of a larger number of people than in our day. These things are so, and they ought to be broadcasted. In proportion as they are advertised, a new and a juster public opinion about the Church will gradually prevail.

Another form of loyalty called for by the times, quite elementary but still important, is that of church-going. The question whether it is worth while to go to church is perplexing, more or less, not a few intelligent and conscientious men and women. Life, they feel, is short and busy. Sunday is the only day a man has to himself. These perplexed individuals are not conscious of getting any good from church attendance, commensurate with the time expended. The sermon does not interest one; the worship does not appeal to another. And there appear to them to be other influences in the community which help them as much to live the best kind of lives as any that they find in the Church. Our whole previous discussion has been designed to persuade all such that this attitude is ill-advised and that they would benefit and be benefited by a much closer alliance with the Church. In addition, the unswerving loyalty of Jesus, Himself, to the higher institutions of His day confronts all conscientious people. There is no plea in justification of the habit of absenteeism from the Church in our day which was not operative in even greater force in His day. Yet we read that "as His custom was He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day."[4] The word of the Law, the singing of the psalms, the prayers of the people, ministered to His soul. It was there He acquired the background of inspiration for his own diviner utterances. Moreover, none knew better what the synagogue meant for the inner life of the Jews nor how it was the means of preservation for all that was best in their spiritual inheritance. Therefore, to the end of His life, He continued His steady allegiance to it.

Of course, church-going is not the sole nor even the principal channel by which to express one's personal Chris-

[4] St. Luke 4:16.

EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

tian interest. Yet, as Dean Hodges has remarked,[6] it is a fairly accurate symbol of it. Heat has many other forms of activity besides that of registering itself on the thermometer, but there is a good deal of significance, nevertheless, in the story that the thermometer tells. Church-attendance serves as a thermometer to register one's interest in and loyalty to the Christian religion; and when one's attendance stands at zero, the chances are that one's interest in things Christian is not at the boiling point. People interested in business are at their places of business; people interested in politics are to be found at the polls; and people interested in common forms of religious life are likely to be found in the neighborhood of a church. One of the best ways for a man or a woman to let other people see and know that he believes in personal religion and is in earnest about it, is to go to church.

Yet, it is astonishing on what slight grounds this self-evident duty is put off, and this simple opportunity to support the cause of religion in the community is lost by a good many church members. For a church member, slovenly church-going is a sin, because it is an act of disloyalty. The place for a soldier is in the ranks. And on Sunday, at least, the place of a Christian is in his pew. As a matter of fact, church-goers divide into two groups: those who go to church as a matter of course, and those who do not. For the one group the question, Shall I go to church? has to be raised and settled afresh every week. The fact on Sunday that it is ten o'clock does not mean that they are going to church as the fact on Monday morning that it is eight o'clock does mean that they are going to school or business. Weekly, the church attendance issue has to be faced and settled exactly as if it had never been faced and settled before. If everything seems on the whole favourable, they go. But if anything unfavourable occurs to them, they do not. Their attendance varies with a hundred circumstances which are as fickle as the weather-vane. And if, on the Sunday they do go, they do not find what they had expected to find, they feel themselves cheated. And they speak their minds about it. There are plenty of such people in every parish.

The other group act and feel differently. They go to church on Sunday just as they go to school or business

[6] "Christianity between Sundays," p. 159.

on Monday. They do not face the one question on each occasion any more than they face the other. What keeps them from church on Sunday, would also keep them from the office on Monday. They would not fail to keep a church appointment any more than they would a business appointment. When Sunday comes they are there. The question of the music for the day or who the preacher is to be does not determine their church-going. A real church-goer survives all manner of preaching, good, bad, and indifferent; and he always takes something beneficial away with him, if it be no more than the consciousness that he has met his own obligation once more to be in his place, bear his witness, and share by all that is within him with his fellowmen the most momentous weekly hour of their common experience. "The churches," James Freeman Clarke has said, ". . . keep alive this sense of the greatness of humanity."

In the Church man meets man on the common ground of humanity. . . . The idler and the hard worker, the public man and the man of privacy, the student and the man of action . . . all meet on one level before God. If I did not go to church for anything else, I should go for this. The sermon might be stupid; then I should not listen to it. The prayers might not suit me; then I should pass them by. The music might grate on my ear; then I should try not to hear it. One would stand before me greater than the Temple, greater than its liturgy, its prayers, its priests, its ritual—my brother man bowed before my Father, God."[6]

It is astonishing that so many people should persist for so long in allowing purely private and personal considerations to settle the question of church allegiance for them. They make it merely a matter of private profit and reward. Even on that ground, the question would probably be answered for them differently if they were capable of a different attitude. For one who has the courage to think more deeply than they, however, the further question must be faced: Would my community on the whole be better or worse off without the Church, faults and all? Is it, on the whole, an advantage for our American people that Sunday shall be separated by a very broad line from the days of the work-shop? Is it mandatory for me, by my

[6] James Freeman Clarke, "Common Sense in Religion," pp. 442–443.

presence and assistance, to help perpetuate the only institution in the complicated life of today whose sole task and mission is to teach those truths upon which the very life of this people may be said to depend?

As we study to understand the real meaning of the times in which we live, full of ominous unrest, when a former easy-going optimism is giving way to general concern over the obtuseness of moral insight and the absence of moral standards in those to whom, by every right, the people ought to look for rectitude and honour, we are driven to take account of stock of those aids and supports to the general moral life upon which everything now depends. There at the heart of every community throughout our land stands the Christian Church, we find ourselves thinking with gratitude. It teaches week in and week out the morality of the New Testament. It holds up before men's minds a high standard of duty. It keeps the life of the great Leader of our race before the minds and hearts of men. How forgivable from this point of view do the much discussed and freely admitted shortcomings of the Church appear to be! How shallow the judgment which allows them to determine one's whole attitude toward the organized religious life in our modern world!

Church loyalty will go far beyond loyalty in speech and in outward allegiance. That makes a good beginning. But its consummation is found in the determined and difficult purpose to make the spiritual ideals, which are implicit in the teaching of the Church, actually operative in one's personal life, in one's social relations, and in the conduct of one's practical affairs. Here, it has been repeatedly urged, is where the Church in our modern world is put to the real test. Can the Church equip men and women with both the spiritual insight and the moral courage to see clearly and practise bravely the plain teaching of the religion of Jesus? How many people can the Church so equip? What is the actual mood of congregations as they leave the walls of the Church? What has gone on in them while they were there? What should have gone on in them while they were there? Is not the source of the discouragement, which the most earnest people feel about the Church, to be found right here? Here is the cause that often saps the strength of the

Church and explains why it has lost, to the extent it has, the attention of mankind. It is because its clear teaching, and explicit summons to live out that teaching in the confused condition of our modern world is not obeyed. "Men feel that they cannot understand the immense paraphernalia of religion. . . . It is so tremendous a fuss about so small a result. If God is in the Church, why doesn't He do more for it, and so, more for the world? The revenues of religion are still enormous. What do they accomplish?"[7] Let the Church re-emphasize the supreme importance of Christ as a Teacher; let it boldly announce the supremacy of His spiritual ideals for us and no for some race of supermen; let it declare that faith consists in "making use of belief"; let it convince men of the power of the Holy Spirit to beat down Satan under its feet; and let it train men to establish contact and close the circuit between it and their souls and obtain a supply of the might of that Spirit sufficient to enable them to live the life of the Spirit in all the perplexing conditions of our modern world, and nothing more will be needed. Our churches should be places where men go up expecting to receive spiritual orders and the superhuman power required to obey them. Christianity is a cause. It is a cause where everything precious is at stake. It is a cause for which men who call themselves Christians should be prepared to make all manner of sacrifice. The Cross is its symbol. Church loyalty carried to the ultimate consists in the dedication of one's life in the spirit of that symbol to the Cause for which it stands.[8]

While the Church needs, and needs desperately, the loyalty of the rank and file in this new Crusade of the Spirit, it also needs leaders. That no army is stronger than its officers is a truism in the sphere of military organization. It is also positively true that the Church is, and can be, no stronger than its leaders. The great need of organized religion, therefore, today is for young men and women with a deep persuasion of the ultimate and spiritual needs of our modern world who deliberately will dedicate themselves to the fundamental task of the religious re-education of humanity, of the teaching in plain terms of the religion of Jesus, as the only solution of the personal and social needs of men. Short of the

[7] "Painted Windows," pp. 217–8 ff.

[8] See Chapter V, pp. 84, 85.

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enlistment of young men and women for this gallant spiritual adventure, who spring to the summons, as the Crusaders did of old, crying, "Deus vult," we shall never conquer the land of our hopes and desires. It is to the glad acceptance of difficulty and danger that the appeal is made in our day.

There never was a more glorious summons to service than the one that goes forth to the youth of our modern world. The same generous instincts which prompted them to respond to the call of country in the days of the Great War, should prompt them today to respond to a higher call than that—and to a more glorious service. It is clear to them now that, in the nature of the case, war can never accomplish permanent moral ends; that carnal weapons cannot bring spiritual victories. Violence may put down violence temporarily, but it never lays permanent foundations. War does not end war. It creates it. If, then, the victory for which millions have laid down their lives is to be won, it can only be as the youth of today engage in a spiritual crusade for righteousness and brotherhood and peace. Men everywhere have about made up their minds that nothing will bring peace to the world but the applied message of the Prince of Peace. The call goes out today for leaders beneath His banner; for those who will enlist for life in His service.

That the Christian ministry ought by all means to be recruited today from the best, most intelligent and most devoted young men of our time, is generally understood. That, as a matter of fact, only a small fraction of the students of our colleges are seriously considering the ministry as a life-calling is also equally well understood. The reasons for it, however, are not so clearly grasped. Many look upon the dearth of candidates for the ministry as a sign that the Church no longer appeals to the young men of our time and that religious activities no longer interest them. It is doubtless true that the same influences in our day and generation which have operated to diminish the general interest in religion, have also tended to divert the thoughts of the young from a profession which deals exclusively with that interest. We have been living in a world absorbed in the discoveries of science, and in the production and distribution of the increasing wealth of our material world. We shall probably have to wait until men, as a whole, return to a proper valuation of spiritual

realities for a genuine revival of interest in the ministry as a life-work.

Another cause, however, and quite the opposite by nature, has been operating in the same direction. It is not true that there is lack of religious interest among young men in our day, but it is true that that interest may now express itself in many and varied forms of service. The sharp line which used to be drawn between the religious work of the ministry and the so-called secular occupations no longer exists. Men understand today that to do "religious work" they do not need to enter the ministry. Many of them decide, indeed, that they can do better work for religion outside the ministry than within it. If one defines the word "ministry" in the broad and generous ways in which it may be best and most justly understood, he will see that there are probably more men going into it than ever. In short, by giving its sanction to a broader definition of the term "religious work," the Church may be said, itself, to have depleted the supply of candidates for the Christian ministry as a profession.

Without doubt, also, the very reasons which have caused many people to lose faith in the Church, have naturally deterred many young men from seriously considering the ministry as their life-work. The remark of a prosperous man of business, upon hearing that a promising young man of his acquaintance was about to enter the ministry: "Why doesn't he go into something real?" reveals a popular point of view. The flood of loose general talk about the failure of the Church, its fatal weakness, its powerlessness, its inability to engage and hold the attention of serious men, has not fallen upon deaf ears. There has been no more calamitous result of this steady slander of the Church than its inevitable effect in deterring young men of intelligence and devotion from entering the ministry. Not until their parents come properly to value the significance of the Church, can we expect our young men in full numbers to enter its service.

On its own merits, no calling is more important, more absorbingly interesting, capable of drawing more out of a man, yielding more constant and abiding happiness than that of the Christian ministry. The day must return when Christian young men will see this, and turn to it in increasing numbers. Anxious as many of them now are to invest their lives where they will yield the largest

returns to others, the unending possibilities of usefulness and of joy in the Christian ministry will sometime be discovered by them.

It is doubtless the most difficult of the professions. The day has passed when the ministry can be recommended, or ought to be recommended, to our young men because of the personal advantages which it offers. It does offer them. It does give the leisure for reading and study which other men lack. One does come, without a long wait, into a position in the community which is honourable and influential. One does have an immediate income, even if it is a small one. But these are not the main facts about the ministry, as a profession, in our modern world. The outstanding fact is that this work makes simply tremendous demands on every side of a man's nature. Its demands on physical strength alone are such that no man who has not, or will not learn to keep in health should consider the ministry for a moment. The modern minister knows nothing of an eight-hour, a ten-hour, or even a twelve-hour day. Where many men have their evenings for relaxation, he rarely has one which he can call his own. Where most men have one day in the week for rest or change of occupation, he is working as a rule for seven days in the week. The legend of a minister's Monday off lingers on only among those who know nothing about him. Moreover, he must do all kinds of work. His labours are never over. His task is endless. These facts will deter (and the ministry is the gainer) any one who is afraid of the toughest kind of work or who has a lazy bone in his body. But it ought to attract men who are looking for hard work.

The ministry is also the most precarious of the professions. It offers the least security; no minister who takes a parish has the least idea how long he will stay with it. In our democratic church life, conditions may arise at any time which may make it inexpedient for him to stay. He understands this situation perfectly. He is the lineal descendant of the evangelists of the New Testament who lived just such an adventurous life. Moreover, it is undeniable that the churches look for young men when vacancies occur. Shortsighted they may be in this, but there is no present indication of an improvement in their moral vision. Many a man, admirably equipped for service, is rejected at an age when doctors and lawyers

and teachers are most in demand. Here is a material disadvantage in the ministry which has to be faced.

Also, if he is dependent altogether on what he earns, his income will barely enable him to live in the decency which his profession demands. This is true of large incomes in the city, as well as of small ones in the country. For with the larger income go larger demands upon it. There is a new conscience in the Church which is determined to make adequate provision so that a man who has been a faithful servant of the Church all his life shall not suffer from actual poverty when his work is done. But a minister remains a poor man to the end of his life. Poverty may not be a vow with the modern, as with the mediæval, ministry, but it is none the less a fact. If these financial considerations induce a man to turn away from the ministry, he ought to be turned away from it. They will not keep real men out of it; for real men soon discover that the ministry rightly conceived is not work that appeals to the morally anæmic, but is a profession for brave men only.

Ministers are the most humble and obscure workers in the world. They rarely get their names on the front page in the papers. They live and die without general recognition or any public honour. Occasionally they receive an unexpected impersonal tribute, such as that of an editorial writer in one of our great dailies, who had the discernment recently to speak in these terms of the Christian ministry: "This band of men, unrecognized, underpaid, overworked, unassuming, that never complain, never strike, is accomplishing, under conditions that makes their performance little short of heroic, a work that is fundamental to the stability and permanence of our civilization."

The consciousness that he is trying to do just such a work is the source of the deepest satisfaction to the humblest minister of Jesus Christ. That is all the chance which a real man wants, and a true minister receives daily and even hourly confirmation of the fact that he has it. A hundred voices are heard on all sides that tell him there is no short-cut solution to any of our problems which will stand the test; that the only solution which will, is contained in the message of which he is alike the custodian and the mouthpiece. Business men and statesmen, philosophers and social workers, all unite to proclaim that upon the teaching of the religion of Jesus, the whole

edifice of our modern civilization must be rebuilt. And that is his task. That is all he is doing. The joy of the ministry lies in the constant realization of his active relationship to an immeasurably vast undertaking. It embraces every act of his life. The ministry is not merely a call to preaching; that is only one way of teaching the religion of Jesus. It is a call to that wider ministry by which the religion of Jesus can be taught as the indispensable truth on which all that is valuable in our life and institutions depends.

For this work he is set aside. Other men have to take the time they give to it from their business, but this is his business.[8] The parish minister has the unrivalled lot in life of being able with good conscience to spend hours of his time on seemingly trivial matters of human relation and adjustment. As a matter of fact, there is no great and small in these things. The whole future history of a human life may hinge on a conversation in passing. From an apparently negligible incident, the largest and most fateful issues in life may take their origin. The minister is a specialist in human concerns. His is the unspeakable privilege of hearing confessions that are not told in any other ear. His only rival in this respect is the family physician of the right type, and here there is no rivalry in the strict sense of the term, but partnership only. The labours of the minister and the doctor, at certain points, overlap. The physician knows well that the source of disease often lies in the mental and spiritual realm. And the minister knows that mental and spiritual disorders often have a physical basis.

That the Church has neglected the ministry of the gospel to the body is undoubtedly true. To what extent, however, a parish minister shall endeavour to practice today the "ministry of healing" is a debatable question. Interesting experiments, looking to the recovery of this ministry, are a part of contemporary church life. That they point to its larger use in the future cannot be questioned. The average minister, however, may leave to the specialist for the present the "practice" of faith-healing or prayer cures. But as he throws himself more and more into his work in the "cure of souls," he will acquire ever-increasing influence and efficiency in promoting health by spiritual contagion. The one object of all his teaching,

[8] The reader is referred to Chapter 3, pp. 41–43.

it has been well said, is to "win the power and to give others the power to say 'God' in all the experiences of life."[10] Upon the learning of this lesson hangs health of body, as well as of soul. There are not two healths, but one. Health is living the life of God in the sphere of the finite.

Thus opportunity for the deepest and broadest imaginable influence belongs to the humblest minister of God. No one should choose the ministry as a profession who is not primarily interested in people. One who is should consider carefully before he chooses any other. No other person in the community has the same chance. The teacher reaches a segment of human life at a certain most critical stage of its development. No one would minimize the value to society of the work of its great teachers. Yet, the minister has an even broader opportunity. He knows little children; he can be the friend, the guide, the intimate adviser of young men and women. His work, however, does not stop there. He goes as a companion with men and women into the thick of the battle of life and continues in living contact with them and the realities of their human experience down to its very end. He is at their side in the most sacred moments of their lives. He touches life at every known point of existence. Of course, he has to learn his art, and he must earn the confidence of people. He must qualify as a confidant by possessing the two necessary virtues which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews lays down as the authentication of the Priesthood of Christ: sympathy and authority.

In Protestant churches, people do not confide in a minister because he is one. Any minister can test the validity of his office in this respect, not by the number of people to whom he goes, but by the number who voluntarily go to him. But let him once by humility, insight, disinterestedness and wisdom be known as a "faithful priest in the things pertaining to God,"[11] and his days are filled with intimate half hours of unending satisfaction. This is what is sometimes carelessly referred to as "parish work" which can be made the best part of a real minister's life. It will take more, however, of his time and strength than any other part of his work, but it will mean more

[10] See Willard L. Sperry, "The Call to the Ministry," Harvard Theological Review, July, 1922, p. 224.
[11] Heb. 2:17.

and accomplish more than any other. Canon Barnett, who founded Toynbee Hall, confessed that the best work done in East London in his time was done "by those who were willing to take time and trouble with individuals."[12] The minister who does this same work with individuals, day in and day out, is doing some of the best work that is done in any community in our modern world. And in the doing of it, he, himself, cannot help adding to his spiritual stature.

Preaching is another great part of the minister's work, and preparation for it takes up much of his time. He is dealing daily with the greatest subjects that can engross the human mind. He is the "companion of all them that fear thee."[13] He seeks entrance into the company of the prophets. He is telling men where to find what they most desire and how to get what they most need. At least once in the week he has the unique privilege of speaking to men and women on the most vital matters that can engage human attention. To no other person in the entire community do people come week after week to hear him speak. No one with an atom of imagination can miss altogether something of what this means. Behind this man are the oracles of God, the full message of Jesus Christ. Before him are men and women in all sorts of predicaments, and a distracted and confused world which needs to have its whole moral life and outlook reformed.

To apply those oracles to these various needs is the preacher's task. It is one of the most important and meaningful that can engage the attention of any man. To discharge it requires conviction, insight, courage and compassion. No one who possesses these qualities that make and keep us truly human, should hesitate to take up this task because he feels that he lacks special gifts. The great prophets of all time have felt the same lack, but they did not fail on this account. The Church does not need orators or "pulpiteers." It has too many of these already. But it desperately needs men who are men enough and truly human enough to speak simply, directly, sincerely and from a deep sense of personal persuasion. Neither is it necessary for the success of this undertaking to have an elaborate theology at one's disposal. Many men are doubtless deterred from entering the ministry because

[12] Willard L. Sperry, ibid., p. 23.
[13] Psalm 119:63.

they think that they must. They are not sure if they "believe enough." Perhaps they do not. But the "enough" concerns the depth and not the extent of their theological belief. No man is qualified to preach who does not believe profoundly that there is a Heart that loves and cares behind all the network and seeming mystery of life. It is this that men are yearning to hear confirmed. The great Englishman, Frederic W. H. Myers, once declared that if he could ask the Sphinx but one question, this would be it: "Is this Universe friendly?" In the same strain, Robert Louis Stevenson is reported to have said that once a man believes that God is on his side, he can do anything. This is the ultimate bed-rock assertion of the Bible. It is the ultimate message of the preacher. Let any one believe it profoundly and speak it sincerely and it will make him over into a prophet of God to our modern world.

Next, there must be the added persuasion that the life and character of God have been fully revealed in Jesus Christ; that in dealing with Christ, we have to do with the moral character of God. There must be this persuasion of the supremacy and finality of the religion of Jesus; that the Christian evangel contains the final answer to the needs of men and provides the spiritual foundation of a true human society. Once more, a preacher must believe that the soul of man reinforced by the life of God through Christ is stronger than all the forces that assail it; that sin is conquerable and death can be overcome; that victory is assured to life.

These are the major convictions of all true preaching. Without them, a man may speak with the voice of men and of angels, and his orating will be like sounding brass. With them, one may speak with diffidence and yet awake unending echoes in the human heart. Moreover, faith grows with progress in preaching. A young man who contemplated entering the ministry once asked a speaker who was presenting its opportunities how one could be sure that his faith would last a life-time. If it did not, he would find himself, perhaps in mid-career, without a profession. How the speaker answered the question, he does not remember. But it has been answered for the questioner in his experience as a minister. When a preacher begins, his faith is like a grain of mustard seed. But when he sees how that faith works, what it can do,

what human transformations it can generate, what victories on the battlefield of life it can win, that faith grows until it becomes an overmastering conviction and its utterance his greatest joy and privilege.

The idea that a preacher cannot speak his mind out needs to be dismissed at once. It is the preacher who does not speak his mind out who fails; not the one who does. No trimmer ever lasted long as a prophet. Insincerity is sure to betray itself and is always fatal. Honesty and courage never fail to win the respect of men whether or not it changes their opinions. At this point, let us quote Dean Sperry's helpful words in full:

"That men resent and resist the necessity for changing their ways of thinking and living is perfectly plain. Churches share in this temper; they have no monopoly of it. But the picture of the minister as a man whose soul is not his own and whose lips are sealed, living as the only remaining moral slave and coward in a world of otherwise absolutely free men, is a grotesque caricature of the facts. If a man decides not to run away into a desert and live there forever in an easy and empty freedom, but to live in this world and to try to keep his own independence in the face of the stolid inertia of human institutions, liberty is costly everywhere, in the ministry or out of it. It is no easier to be a free man in the law or medicine or the teaching profession, in a bank or in the editorial room of a newspaper or in politics, than it is in the ministry. All things considered, it may be harder, because the world does not expect of the layman quite that integrity that it expects, rightly or wrongly, from the minister. Do not think for a moment that merely because you have decided not to enter the ministry you have insured your moral self-respect and independence for the rest of your life. The fight has only begun, and the case will be fought out on other grounds where defeat is just as possible, and perhaps even more probable. My own observation is that if a man does not abuse his opportunities in a pulpit, to rant wildly at things as they are, or to indulge in sentimental utopian pipe-dreams, but thinks soberly, and with a generous and hopeful mind, about the changes in men's ways of thinking and living that Christianity asks, there is no place where he is so free to say what he really believes as in a pulpit. He will meet opposition and criticism, it is true, but he does not escape them by keeping

out of a pulpit. And, somehow deep in the common conscience, beneath all superficial resentment and worldly opposition, there is the conviction that just that is what the Church is for—to change men's ways of thinking and living. A disgruntled parishioner once complained that Newman's preaching interfered with the way he did business. And Newman answered, 'Sir, it is the business of the Church to interfere with people.' In the profoundest sense of the word that is true, and the world knows and silently admits it. Religion does interfere with life, radically and deliberately. But if that interference is made in the spirit of wisdom and charity, rather than of truculent abuse, I am prepared to defend the proposition that a man can call his soul his own in the ministry today and speak what is on his mind quite as freely from a liberal pulpit as from any other single point of vantage. Only, all this rests on the man's patent sincerity and humility and charity. Without these qualifications, he will never be a free man in the ministry. But that is simply another way of saying that he would be a moral coward everywhere else."[14] Such, then, is the work and life that the ministry presents to one seeking how to use his life to the highest advantage. Is there any calling which offers a higher opportunity or richer rewards?

In order to have a true revival of interest in the ministry as a profession, it is necessary also to have a revival of family religion. It is in homes, saturated with the Christian spirit, that young men are bred who will choose the ministry above all other callings. Such homes nurture the deep religious interest which must underlie the choice of the ministry as a profession. There was a time when boys were dedicated from birth in godly homes by the hopes and prayers of their parents to the work of the ministry. That practice must come in again before the Church can be manned by men with so deep a sense of mission for its task. The Church lacks and calls for leaders. If it can find or breed them, possibilities of its influence are unmeasured. Filling the ranks of the ministry with men of intelligence, devotion and a deep sense of mission would be the answer to some of the hardest problems of our modern world.

[14] Willard L. Sperry, ibid., pp. 227, 228.

Of course, the ministry is not the only choice open to those who wish to invest their lives in the service of our common Christianity. Various forms of "social service" present attractive and important fields of humanitarian and Christian endeavour. Once upon a time, the Church presented the only opportunity for Christian life service, but today, many philanthropic agencies offer opportunity for those who desire to spend their lives in the direct service of their fellow-men. Such are the social settlements, the different forms of Associated Charities"[15] work in our large cities, and the various organizations for the promotion of health, the suppression of crime, of child-labour and other kindred forms of community and public service. In the creation and manning of these agencies, the Church has, in a way, impoverished itself. To them a stream of wealth flows annually from people who say that they "believe in" hospitals and societies for the alleviation of poverty and a prevention of crime, while they have ceased to "believe in" the Church which has created them. Into the administrative work of these organizations enter annually many young men who feel that they can there serve their fellow-men, without having to endure some of the undoubted drawbacks which the churches, as now administered, force upon the Christian ministry. Here as well the Church is indirectly proving its worth to modern society, for it equips the great company of those who are thus labouring for their fellow-men with the ideals of service and the inspiration necessary for this work. In the truest sense, these are all in the service of the Church. For their lives are an illustration of simple obedience to the word of Jesus: "I am among you as he that serveth."[16]

Prominent among these non-ecclesiastical organizations for Christian service are the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations. They offer a large opportunity for the directest forms of Christian service outside of the Christian ministry. The work, the importance, and the widespread influence of these organizations are so well known that no extended account of them is needed here. They incorporate the most ambitious and the most successful program of organized Protestantism in the field of social and Christian effort. From small beginnings, these organizations have grown into a world-wide

[15] Now generally called, "Family Welfare Work."
[16] St. Luke 22:27.

institution, banding together the youth of all lands, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Through their International Committees, the Associations penetrate into every land, and are a powerful adjunct to the work of Christian Missions. According to the latest statistics,[17] the Young Men's Christian Associations of North America, numbering 1,560, have a total net property of $147,576,600, and an annual expense budget of $47,279,600. There are 902,673 members, 5,045 paid officials, and 81,430 directors and committeemen. In foreign lands there are 869 Associations with 125,384 members, and the foreign budget amounts to $1,400,095, while the building program in foreign lands calls for the erection of buildings costing in the aggregate of $5,000,000, a large part of which already has been subscribed.

The Young Women's Christian Associations[18] number 1,258, 249 of these being city associations and 697 student associations. Their total membership is 518,735, and the total valuation of their property is over $40,000,000. The annual expense budget is $23,500,000. There are 3,450 paid secretaries in America, and 157 American secretaries in 49 centres in 13 foreign countries. The annual budget for foreign work is $433,356. These figures reveal the extent of the Christian investment in the work of these organizations.

No prolonged study of the history of Protestantism since the organization of these Associations is needed to show the service which they have rendered to the Church. They have been pioneers, for one thing, in proving that "the Gospel" was not meant to be confined to spiritual needs alone, but embraced the demands of mind and body as well; that the inclusive development of one's total nature is necessary if one is to attain to "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." This demonstration has been given through the great physical and educational departments of Association work. Again, the Associations reach sections of American manhood and womanhood which the Church has but imperfectly succeeded in

[17] See Year Book and Official Roster of the Young Men's Christian Associations of North America, 1922, pp. vii, xii, xiii, 107, 108, 288, 350.

[18] See Report of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States, 1922. Also leaflet, "Seventeen Years Ago," published by the National Board.

drawing within the sphere of its influence. The great industrial branches, and their work for foreign and immigrant youth, are illustrations. The Associations do an important work in towns and rural communities. They have been leaders in the work of Church unification. Created by and belonging to no one part of Protestantism, with many denominations represented on their Boards and in their membership, their activities are prophetic of the work that will be done by the coming united Protestant Church. Here, to all intents and purposes, is Church unity at work for the Christian reclamation of the youth of the land.

No more powerful instrumentalities exist today among our schools and colleges are engaged in presenting to the student mind a wholesome and intelligent Christian ideal, and in counteracting the secular influences which operate to weaken among them a sense of church loyalty and a deep Christian interest. The college Christian associations offer students the opportunity to express their own convictions as Christian young men and women. The student summer conferences conducted by the Associations are centres of religious inspiration and information, and the Associations are able to advise and assist the student organizations which initiate and direct the religious work in schools and colleges. The Associations have made a great appeal to the younger boys and girls, winning their allegiance and, through groups in high schools and elsewhere, supplying them with wholesome activities and ideals.[19] The Associations have won the confidence of manufacturers and of great industrial concerns. They serve railroads, shops, banks and offices. In countless ways, not open to the churches directly, they do extension work for the churches and enlarge the sphere of their influence. The Associations thus present an attractive and important field for Christian life service.

It needs to be borne in mind that these organizations are in no sense a substitute for the Church, nor do they work independently of it. Rather the Church has mothered them and put some of its best blood into their working forces. Their aim is to cooperate with the Church, in turn, and to build it up, besides doing for the Church

[19] The Girl Reserves program of the Young Women's Christian Association alone enrolls 177,000 adolescent girls in definite forms of religious education and service.

specialized forms of work which many churches are not equipped to do for themselves. Association leaders are loyal and enthusiastic church workers. It is the ambition of both Associations to train workers for the churches, and to teach the importance of the Church and the value for the individual and for society of membership in it.

The missionary service of the Church constitutes the final form of life service with which this chapter can deal. It is the call to as heroic living as is done in this age. This splendid altruism coming up out of the Church best vindicates its right to the name of Christ. All those who are looking for the most gallant forms of Christian adventure will find here an almost irresistible appeal. It is to the students of our schools and colleges that the Church turns for recruits for this most difficult and self-sacrificing form of service. And, it is to the glory of both Church and college that it does not turn in vain.

There exists at the present time an organization known as the Student Fellowship for Christian Life-Service. Its constitution, adopted at the University of Illinois in December, 1922, declares that its "ultimate purpose is a fellowship of all students, dedicated to Christian life-service," and that its immediate object is "to unite students dedicated to life-service in America . . . in prayer, study and vigorous effort to make America Christian for the sake of the world." To become a member of this fellowship, "the student shall indicate his hearty sympathy with and determination to advance the purpose of the movement by signing the following Personal Declaration which shall be interpreted as meaning the dedication of his life to a distinct phase of Christian service as a vocation: 'I thoughtfully accept the challenge of a world-wide need of Christ, and purpose with God's help to make Christian service the motive, guide and end of my life.'" The Fellowship thus becomes a recruiting agency among the students of America for Home Missionary service through their own churches. By means of conferences, addresses, and organized effort it is proposed to secure for the Home Mission boards the men and women whom they need for the prosecution of their important work.

And how important it is! America, it is perceived, is today the key to world-evangelization.[20] If America can

[20] See Charles E. Burton, D.D., "Life Investment in America."

be sufficiently Christianized, no uncertainty will remain about evangelizing the non-Christian world. It is not simply that America would then furnish missionaries enough and money enough to do the work, but that America would, in that event, present to the non-Christian world an undeniable illustration of the worth and practicability of the Christian ideal. The most serious obstacle confronting the propagation of Christianity in non-Christian lands would thus be removed.

The churches in our great centres must come to grips with the problem of teaching their members to confine themselves to Christian ways of acquiring and using wealth, and of creating a social conscience which shall attack well-known causes of poverty and remove the curse of the destitution and squalor of our great cities. They will also operate to Christianize our social practice at other vital and critical points, in their dealings "with the strata of society where danger lurks, and in nourishing the altruistic, self-sacrificing, truly patriotic sentiments and sanctions." The men and women who volunteer for missionary work at home must be willing to live the somewhat primitive life of new communities and spend their days in the sparsely settled districts of the country; or where spiritual destitution is found at its worst, and all forms of crude religious ideas flourish; or where the Mormon menace is found, and many primitive forms of immorality must be combated.

New communities in our great western commonwealths are constantly springing up which call for churches, schools, and Christian institutions. "The rapid changes in American life have depopulated thousands of rural communities to an extent that makes them unable now, of themselves, to support churches. Organized religion is doomed unless help comes from without." "Eighty-three per cent of the rural evangelical churches of America today have fewer than one hundred members. Two-thirds of them have been losing ground in recent years." Yet thousands of boys and girls are growing up in these communities who will make their way into positions of prominence in their later life—if they are rightly brought up. Again, there are the "marginal regions" far removed from centres of American life and culture, like the mountain districts in the South. Work for the immigrant in our cities is of pressing importance. "By the 1920 census

13,712,754 people, born on foreign shores, with approximately 17,278,070 of their children, live in America." To leaven this great mass of new citizenry with Christian ideals is a part of the home missionary task of the Church. The work for the ten million Negroes of the land, and for the Indian, must be added. Of the 340,000 Indians in this country today, only 133,000 can speak English, and only 91,000 can read and write.

The call today is for men and women by the hundred, willing to undertake these forms of self-sacrificing service at the points of greatest need. Parish missionaries are wanted; directors of religious education, social service workers, doctors and teachers. All of these are man-size jobs for well-trained college men and women of rugged health and of deepest devotion. Such, in briefest mention, is the call of the Church for Christian service in America.

Beyond the shores of our own country remain parts of the world not yet reached and penetrated by the Christian evangel. The very fact that the Church, notwithstanding its immense task at home, is vigorously pushing its work in foreign lands and successfully appealing to the young manhood and womanhood of America to enlist for life in foreign service, is final proof of the immense vitality of its life and conscience.

For years there has existed the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions. It includes in its membership both men and women students of Canada and the United States who have signed its Declaration: "It is my purpose, if God permit, to become a foreign missionary." The Movement has had for its four-fold purpose to awaken an intelligent and active interest in foreign missions; to enroll a sufficient number of volunteers to meet the needs of the various foreign boards; to help those intending to become foreign missionaries to prepare for their work; and to create among church workers who stay at home a sense of their responsibility for the maintenance and care of those who go abroad. For the past thirty-six years, this work has been done, with the result that during the year 1921, 637 young men and women sailed for their foreign mission posts, the largest number of any year in the history of the Movement. The total number of student volunteers who have gone as missionaries to foreign lands is over 10,000, surely an

impressive offering by the Church of living young men and women to the service of the world. And it is probable that thus far we have witnessed only slender tricklings compared to the mighty stream which is to follow in the next decade. The promotion of mission study classes in colleges, the holding every four years of a great quadrennial convention in the interest of foreign missionary enlistment, and the enthusiastic support by some of the largest colleges and universities of their own missions in foreign lands, have stimulated interest in this form of Christian service to a degree never before attained in this or any other land.

Many and compelling are the reasons which will influence the Christian youth of our land to undertake this high calling. A reading of missionary biography will convince them that nowhere has human character risen to higher Christian dimensions than in the persons of its missionaries. These men and women do not admit that their work is one of self-sacrifice for the simple reason that in them is left no self to sacrifice. After they have made the glad surrender, they will experience the spiritual relief consequent upon their deliverance from the reproach that haunts many others who have taken upon them the Christian name that their lives have little in them of that heroism which is inseparable from the Christian Ideal:

"If He could doubt on His triumphant Cross,
How much more I, in the defeat and loss
Of seeing all my selfish dreams fulfilled,
Of having lived the very life I willed,
Of being all that I desired to be?
My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" [21]

Quite otherwise does the individual read the outcome when a life is invested in work fundamental to human welfare.

Testimony as to the indispensable value of the work of our foreign missionaries is now profuse, and is well understood and accepted everywhere. When Robert Louis Stevenson said, "I regard the presence of the missionaries the one redeeming feature of the residence of white men in Samoa," [22] he was only saying of one part of the globe what all well-informed persons now say of every part of it. What the modern missionary has done for health,

[21] William Dean Howells, "Calvary."
[22] See "Tusitalea," Atlantic Monthly, March, 1923.

education, language, diplomacy and international relations is a commonplace in the history of our modern world. Young men and women in increasing numbers are eager to put their lives where they will count most. That is why increasing numbers of them are choosing foreign missionary service.

Above all, the deepest of all joys, from the earliest days, that falls to the Christian missionary has been that of communicating the evangel of Jesus to those who have never heard it, the good tidings of liberation from thraldom of sin and death and the power of a new life through Him. The modern missionary is not lacking in appreciation of the values of other faiths—neither does he claim for his own a monopoly of revealed religion. Rather he looks upon Christianity as gathering up and uniting in itself the partial witness of other religions and completing the truths taught by other teachers. The modern missionary is firm in his conviction that Christianity is the supreme and final faith: but with this note of authority there goes also the attitude of sympathy and brotherhood. The idea that conviction and bigotry must go hand in hand is disproved by the character and work of the best missionaries. They have shown us a truth which lies just far enough beneath the surface not to be at once evident—that the truest sympathy is always joined with the deepest faith; and he who has the strongest convictions of the truth of his own evangel is most deeply impressed with the religious capacity of all men. The missionary who is himself most overwhelmingly impressed with the uniqueness and imperativeness of the Gospel has always been the world's most catholic-minded leader. No one could hold more firmly than David Livingstone to the essential truth of Christ's Saviourhood for all the world. For that reason, when they came to bury him, they could find no better inscription to chisel on his monument than those most tender words of our Lord: "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold."

From every side, the word comes that the greatest need of the world today is the revival of religion at its best.[23]

[23] ". . . If you have a religion that can get hold of people, grip them and lift them . . . come over and help us. The world will never get forward by floating on a sea of experimentation." Letters of Franklin K. Lane, p. 325.

Present conditions make the witness of the Church more important than ever before. The pressure of life is tremendous. Into this storm-swept world, the Church must send a message of hope and its summons to turn to the Christian way of life. All over the land there is a deep-felt need of God born out of the darkness and despair of the time. Does not the call come today to every sound man to forsake his attitude of aloofness and to lay aside the rôle of the critic and to cast in his lot and his life with the Church which has preserved for over nineteen centuries the standards by which its own shortcomings are to be judged?

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